

# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

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### CONTENTS

	PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK ... ..	711
BOOKS AND THE PUBLIC ... ..	714
CRUISERS AND DISARMAMENT. By C. Ernest Fayle ... ..	715
INDUSTRIAL CHANGES IN THE MIDLANDS. By G. C. Allen ... ..	716
AT ST. STEPHEN'S: "RULERS OR RABBITS?" By Our Parliamentary Correspondent ... ..	718
LIFE AND POLITICS. By Kappa ... ..	719
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Sheltered and Unsheltered Price- Levels (J. M. Keynes); Equal Franchise (Mrs. F. D. Acland); British Films (John Maxwell); Birth Con- trol (Margaret Chapman); Pronunciation (L. P. Wilkinson and P. C. Thornton) ... ..	720-722
GEORGE GISSING. By Virginia Woolf ... ..	722
THE POOR MAN'S OYSTER. By James Blake ... ..	724
PLAYS AND PICTURES. By Omicron ... ..	725
THE WORLD OF BOOKS:— Detective Stories. By Leonard Woolf ... ..	727
REVIEWS:— Late Eighteenth-Century Drama. By Richard Aldington ... ..	728
Fiction. By Edwin Muir ... ..	728
The New Roman History and the Old Roman Law ... ..	730
An Unhappy Warrior ... ..	732
Miss Hook of Holland ... ..	732
The Man Charles Stuart ... ..	732
John Evelyn to his Grandson ... ..	734
Dark, Darker, and Darkest Africa. By Sylva Norman ... ..	734
ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE ... ..	736
THE OWNER-DRIVER. By Rayner Roberts ... ..	736
FINANCIAL SECTION:— The Week in the City ... ..	738

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### EVENTS OF THE WEEK

EVENTS in China have moved with remarkable rapidity, and there is at least the possibility of still more important developments in the near future. In the first place, Mr. Chen, while reiterating his protest against the dispatch of troops to Shanghai, has accepted Sir Austen Chamberlain's statement of February 10th as removing the main impediment to negotiations. Definite agreements have already been signed for the transfer of the Hankow and Kiukiang Concessions, on terms which give a reasonable assurance of efficient and equitable administration. In addition, the Nationalist Government have promised to pay compensation for any looting at Kiukiang that can be traced to the culpable negligence of their agent. In the notes exchanged between Mr. Chen and Mr. O'Malley, the former repeated his statement that the Nationalist Government were willing to enter into amicable negotiations for the settlement of all outstanding questions; but that they could not recognize

the right of Peking, or of any local authorities, to negotiate for the return of concessions. Mr. O'Malley, on the other hand, insists, very properly, on the right of the British Government to enter into negotiations with any Chinese officials exercising undisputed *de facto* authority.

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The position at Shanghai is complicated both by the international status of the Concession, and by the military position. On February 19th a general strike was proclaimed for the purpose of embarrassing Sun Chuan-fang's communications; but it was expressly declared not to be directed against the British. On February 22nd, two Chinese cruisers in the river mutinied, and opened fire on the arsenal, though the explanations given of this episode are various and conflicting. Meanwhile, Sun Chuan-fang's line of defence was crumbling, owing to the demoralization of his troops, and the latest report is that he has abdicated his position, and fled to the north. A part of Sun's army is still holding out against the Cantonese to the south-west of Shanghai, while a strong northern force under Chang Tsun Chang, a lieutenant of Chang Tso-lin's, is concentrating to the north-west. The intentions of this force remain doubtful. There are persistent rumours that Chang is negotiating with Chiang Kai-shek, the Cantonese Commander-in-Chief, for creating a neutral zone round Shanghai; for dividing the revenues of the Yang-tze valley, and for co-operating in the establishment of a Central Government, for the purpose of effecting a final settlement of all questions with the Western Powers.

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These reports may well be premature; but they are not so wildly improbable as they may appear at first sight. Sun Chuan-fang may now be regarded as eliminated, and there is little to stay the march of the Cantonese on Shanghai itself. On the other hand, the northern forces are solidly established at Nanking, where they block the communications of Shanghai with the interior, and Chiang Kai-shek has to face the prospect of hard and doubtful fighting before he can establish Cantonese control in the Yang-tze valley. Chang Tso-lin, for his part, has shown himself little inclined to risk his secure position in the north for speculative adventures in the south, and though each party has sworn a crusade against the other, any agreement based on the recovery of China's sovereign rights would be amply sufficient to save their face. As we have repeatedly pointed out, an agreement for division of the Yang-tze revenues would remove the chief obstacle to a settlement of both the internal and external problems. Meanwhile, it is satisfactory that Shanghai itself remains fairly quiet, despite the strike, ruthless executions by the Chinese authorities in the native city, and a flow of Chinese refugees to the International Concession. Everything shows that both the Cantonese and

the Northern authorities are alive to the desirability of agreement with the Powers, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, Sir Miles Lampson, Mr. O'Malley, and Mr. Chen are to be congratulated on a substantial improvement in the situation. At this stage, any move by the other Powers interested in the surtax question and the Shanghai settlement might have great results.

\* \* \*

Sir Austen Chamberlain's Note of protest and warning to Moscow is a curiously ineffective document. Though full of quotations showing the wickedness of Soviet representatives and their hostility to the British Empire, it reveals no new duplicity, and it seems rather late in the day to protest against the support given to the General Strike, to the Miners, and to the Cantonese. Sir Austen remarks himself that "To embody these complaints in a formal note of protest might in the circumstances seem superfluous." And the Note has obviously been written more for the gratification of the *DAILY MAIL* and its anti-Bolshevik following at home than for its influence on Anglo-Russian relations. As a sop to the Russophobes it appears, however, to have lamentably failed. The *DAILY MAIL* received it on Thursday with contumely and scorn:—

"As a display of feebleness and 'funk,' Sir Austen Chamberlain's long-heralded Note of protest to the Soviet representative in London will make the blood of every self-respecting Briton tingle in his veins. . . . We have heard a more formidable scolding given by an elderly lady to her Pekingese in Hyde Park."

The Government ought to have learnt before now that a sop to these campaigners only whets their appetite and increases their contempt for those who give it.

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If Sir Austen Chamberlain thinks it worth while to protest against Soviet anti-British propaganda in China, he has, of course, ample grounds of complaint. But to suggest, as Lord Birkenhead, for instance, appears to do in all his public utterances, that the Russians are solely responsible for our troubles in China is absurd. Sir Austen's whole policy is obviously based on a very different interpretation of events. There has in fact been a sensible diminution of Soviet propaganda outside Russia during recent months. The party which believes in putting Russia's own house in order has been victorious over that which stood for the promotion of world-revolution as the next step. No doubt the rise of a powerful Nationalist movement in China provided an opportunity for a last fling which even the former party could not resist, but if we can come to terms with Mr. Chen, that opportunity will have passed, and the policy of stirring up trouble abroad may be abandoned. There is already a significant change in the tone of some Soviet leaders. Litvinoff's expressed desire for the establishment of "really friendly relations" with Britain has a new ring, and there could hardly be a less opportune moment for smashing the trade agreement with Russia.

\* \* \*

The French, Italian, and Japanese Governments have now replied to President Coolidge's proposals for a Naval Conference. The French Government have declined the proposals on the ground that they do not wish to act in advance of the League, or to commit themselves to a partial limitation of naval armaments while the problem of limiting the sea, land, and air forces of all countries is being explored and examined. The Italian Government have rejected the proposals outright for "geographical" reasons which are very

obscurely expressed, and for military reasons which are equally unconvincing. The Japanese have cordially accepted the proposals in principle; but are clearly disinclined to agree in advance to the extension of the 5:5:8 ratio to the lighter types. Great Britain is consulting the Dominions before making her reply. Meanwhile American opinion has been greatly irritated by the French refusal, and is inclined to press for the conclusion of a Three-Power Pact, if the assent of Great Britain can be obtained.

\* \* \*

The French Note is closely reasoned and temperate in expression, and we are sorry that it has been assailed as "disingenuous" in the American Press; first, because there is a great deal of force in the French view, which is widely shared by genuine believers in disarmament; and, secondly, because the Press comments tend to set up a sort of rivalry between the President's proposals and the work of the Preparatory Commission. The diplomatic problem at the moment is to make the President's proposals support and reinforce the League's investigations, and to avoid a clash between the two. The terms and tone of the British reply may, therefore, be a matter of extreme importance. So long as the League experts and the majority of the Continental Governments consider that the chances of a fair deal all round are best served by the "all-in" discussions at Geneva, it would be disastrous for Great Britain to jeopardize the prospects of a general agreement by independent action. On the other hand, the President's proposals cannot be abruptly turned down without a deplorable effect on American opinion. There seems no reason why the British delegates at Geneva should not be authorized to discuss with their American and Japanese colleagues the basis of a Three-Power Pact, on the understanding that these discussions will only be converted into formal negotiations if the final report of the Preparatory Commission fails to disclose a reasonably hopeful basis for the League Conference. Such discussions might well contribute to the solution of the larger problem.

\* \* \*

The Cotton Yarn Association, the objects of which have been explained and supported by Mr. Keynes in these columns, was, after many doubts and difficulties, successfully launched in Manchester on February 18th. The Association had set itself to secure the adhesion of 19,000,000 spindles, which would represent 70 per cent. of the American yarns spun for sale. They have in fact obtained 20,692,595 spindles, which is about 76 per cent. of the industry. This result is a great success for Mr. H. Dixon and Mr. Ryan, the Chairman and Secretary of the Organizing Committee. The Association has a stiff task in front of it, and it is doubtful how much loyalty in adversity it will be able to command. We hope that, so far as its minimum price policy is concerned, it will keep the official figure below what spinners can normally hope to obtain. It starts, however, in a decidedly favourable atmosphere. There is no doubt that the revival of business in Manchester since the beginning of the year has been in respect of volume on a really substantial scale, though profit-margins have remained unsatisfactory, and scarcely began to recover until the last week or two. Some authorities estimate that the volume of output in the American section, both spinning and weaving, has increased from 60-65 per cent. of capacity at the end of last year to 75-80 per cent. at the present time. This should have a favourable influence over export statistics in due course.

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So many official committees have reported during the last few weeks that there is little hope of their all obtaining, for their various recommendations, the publicity they deserve. The latest of these, and by no means the least important, is the Colwyn Committee on National Debt and Taxation, which has just made known the results of its labours after sitting for nearly three years. Its conclusions have reference to a number of issues in regard to which enlightenment is needed—among others, the size and distribution of the national income; the volume of saving; the incidence of income tax, of death duties, and of taxes on commodities; and the best means of funding the national debt and of providing for its eventual extinction. The general drift of the majority report (the representatives of Labour on the Committee have expressed their attitude independently) is to vindicate direct as against indirect taxation, and indeed to suggest its extension, and to propose more drastic measures for the reduction of debt than have so far been adopted. Indeed, the Colwyn Committee will probably be remembered for two things: (1) Their recommendation that the Sinking Fund should be increased to £75 millions in the near future and ultimately to £100 millions, and (2) their support of the doctrine, which is orthodox doctrine to economists but rank heresy to most business men, that the damage done to trade and industry by high direct taxation is not of the first importance. Upon these matters there is no difference between the majority and the minority.

The Balfour Committee, which is busily investigating the foundations of British industry and trade, is still hard at work, and has still much to do, apparently, before it can begin to formulate conclusions. It comes to the surface, however, once a year or so to report on the progress of its labours. Its latest Report—a volume of five hundred pages on "Factors in Industrial and Commercial Efficiency"—is a valuable collection of materials, well worth the five shillings asked for it. The "factors" coming under review are somewhat miscellaneous in character, but in regard to some of them at least up-to-date information is urgently needed; under this head, for example, come Combination in Industry and Training and Recruitment, which are both dealt with at some length in the Report. It is extraordinary how little informed discussion there is of either of these topics, in view of the relevance of both to that "industrial reconstruction" now presumed to be taking place. As regards industrial combination, one conclusion at least seems to appear, and that is that we are likely to be driven in the near future into some sort of regulative legislation. Not that we need regard with a hostile eye the "trust movement," which so obviously is again making rapid headway. But if this movement offers possibilities of public advantage, it also threatens dangers. And it is clearly desirable that there should be statutory powers to compel the disclosure of fuller information than it is now possible to obtain.

As regards industrial training and recruitment, so many questions of urgent importance here impinge upon one another that statesmanship of a high order will be called for if they are to be visualized as a whole. They have reference, not only to the potential needs of industry, but to the immediate need of reducing the volume of unemployment. They are being attacked already from several angles, but the labours of those concerned need co-ordinating. The Blanesburgh Committee, for example, has glanced at the problem and passed it by ("some of us would like to see developed

a system of training the unemployed for other occupations"); the Malcolm and Salvesen Committees are considering the industrial requirements of the juvenile; the Hadow Committee has proposed a thorough reconstruction of the educational machine; the Ministry of Labour is collecting data on the subject of apprenticeship. But it is not only the direction of the flow of new labour into the right channels with which we are immediately concerned. There is so much capacity and skill available that we do not know how to use. The problem of the displacement of coal-miners is likely to come to a head in the near future. Nor, unfortunately, is the problem that is so apparent in the coalfields by any means confined to them.

Circular 1388, of February 11th, is Lord Eustace Percy's latest contribution to the development of educational policy. It prescribes "certain limiting standards" now to be applied in the calculation of grant, which, during 1927-8, "will continue to be paid on a percentage basis." The effect of the Circular is to intensify suspicions, which have long been widely felt, as to the general character of the Board's policy. Lord Eustace, as numerous audiences up and down the country have been privileged to discover for themselves, is very pleased with his administrative record. "Progress with economy" is the slogan put forward in a recent speech of his; "there was," the report of this felicitous utterance continues, "no doubt about the economy." But what—one is impelled to inquire—of the progress? The new Code, which has now been seven months in operation, is much less exacting than the old one, its object being to give more scope to Local Education Authorities. It is rumoured that behind this greater elasticity there lies not progress but reaction. Some authorities, like Lord Eustace, are inclined to put economy first. The situation needs clearing up. What, for example, is happening as regards the reduction of the average size of classes, the provision of better qualified teachers, the replacement of dilapidated schools? What "limiting standards" are being applied at the lower end of the scale? It is difficult to resist the conclusion—in the light of available evidence—that the situation is worsening; it is certain that developments which ought to be readily attainable, in view of the continued fall in the birth-rate, are not even being attempted.

The terms of the Agreement reached between the Government of India and the South African Union at the Round Table Conference have now been published. The main points are as follows. The Union Government agrees not to proceed further with the Areas Reservation Bill, and to do everything possible to assist Indians domiciled in South Africa to conform to Western standards of life. They will also organize a scheme of assisted emigration to India, or elsewhere, for Indians who are not prepared to conform to these standards. The Government of India, for its part, recognizes the right of the Union to insist on the application of Western standards, and undertakes to look after repatriated emigrants. In order to secure continuous co-operation in the working of the agreement, an Indian Agent will be appointed in the Union. Everything, of course, depends on the interpretation of the phrase "Western standards of life," and on the adequacy of the assistance provided in respect, for instance, of housing. At the same time, the spirit shown by both sides during the negotiations, and the reception of the agreement, give every reason to hope that this peculiarly delicate and thorny problem has been finally removed from the atmosphere of controversy.

## BOOKS AND THE PUBLIC

THESE are days when a searchlight of scrutiny is being directed upon our leading industries, when of one after another the question is being asked, "Is all well?" without eliciting very reassuring replies. It will be useful, we think, to ask this question of another industry which plays a much less important part in our economic system than coal or cotton or shipbuilding or iron and steel, but which in the long run affects our national life as profoundly as any of these. We refer to the industry concerned with the production and the sale of books. Is all well with the British publishing and bookselling trades? Is the organization which brings authors and readers together, and which, incidentally, does much to determine what is written and what is read, in a healthy state, and is it developing along healthy lines?

Few subjects are so complex, or so interesting; and a debt of gratitude is due to Mr. Stanley Unwin for his recent book, "The Truth about Publishing,"\* which makes it possible for the lay public to envisage the matter, for the first time, in a reasonable perspective. The woes of authors, and the wrongs which they suffer at the hands of publishers, constitute an almost classic theme. It seems inevitable that professional authors, apart from a few exceptional best-sellers, will always be a struggling, ill-remunerated class. They write not merely to satisfy a public desire, but to satisfy their own desires. They must expect the material deprivations which are the lot of those who work for the work's own sake.

The woes of authors thus arise from the nature of the case. Is it true that they also suffer wrongs at the hands of publishers? Tradition—at any rate authors' tradition—says that they do; and at first sight it would seem natural to expect that they would. The typical professional author is—or is supposed to be—an unpractical, unbusinesslike, unorganized individual, anxious, above all, that the book to which he has devoted so much labour should be read. What chance has this unworldly ninny in striking a bargain with an astute, urbane, commercial-minded man? Is he not marked down as the predestined prey? Well, upon this matter Mr. Unwin has several interesting things to say. If there are some circumstances which make the author a weak bargainer, there are others which react equally unfavourably on the publisher's position. If the intense desire to write ensures a supply of authors far in excess of any purely commercial demand for their services, a similar psychological phenomenon tends constantly towards an over-supply of publishers. Almost everyone who has had a reasonably good education fancies that he would make a good publisher, however conscious he may be of his deficiencies for other occupations. In Mr. Unwin's words:—

"The attractions of publishing as a profession are such that scarcely a week goes by without every firm of repute receiving applications from men just down from the universities, anxious to adopt it as a career. In common with most publishers, I have interviewed scores of such applicants. A few are genuinely keen, and are ready to make some sacrifice to qualify themselves, but for the most part they appear to think publishing a 'soft job,' which appears to consist of reading an occa-

sional manuscript. In practice, what seems to happen is that the young man is asked by his father what he would like to be, and replies that he does not know. When questioned what he is interested in, he perhaps replies he likes reading. It is then assumed he ought to be a publisher."

It is not only "firms of repute" who receive such applications:—

"If a publisher who is in low water advertises that a directorship or partnership is available to anyone introducing capital, he will be inundated with offers, mostly from fond parents who want their sons to start as directors instead of going right through the business."

The results of this are, in Mr. Unwin's judgment, "disastrous":—

"It enables the most hopelessly inefficient and incompetent firms to prolong their existence, and confronts the efficient publisher with the most difficult form of competition."

The world of publishers is thus heterogeneous and unorganized. Competition is not only keen; it often takes the form of a scramble of what Mr. Unwin, with some reason, regards as illegitimate poaching; so that authors of established reputation have no difficulty in striking very favourable bargains, and in some cases obtain conditions which make even a "best-seller" doubtful business from the publisher's point of view. On the other side, the book-selling trade, which a generation ago was in a very weak condition, is now fairly strongly organized. Protected itself in its dealings with the public against any price-cutting by the Net Book Agreement, it is constantly tending to extract larger trade discounts from the publishers. Thus the book trade now constitutes a rather striking exception to the general rule that the wholesaler is in a stronger bargaining position than the retailer. Again, though books are commonly supposed to have become very dear since the war, their prices in the large majority of cases have not kept pace with the general price-level, although the costs of publication have increased much more. Thus, in one way and another, conditions have become much more difficult for the publisher; he is working on a much smaller margin than before; the days of huge publishing fortunes have, in Mr. Unwin's judgment, passed; and it is interesting to observe that he couches his advice to the young aspirant in the following terms:—

"Do not go into publishing if money-making is your chief objective. Publishing has rewards to offer far greater than money. A decent enough living can be made at it if you have really mastered the technique and have the necessary aptitude; but your day's work will never be done, and it is possible that the better work you do the less monetary reward you will receive."

It is not, however, with the woes of publishers, as such, any more than with the woes of authors, that we are mainly concerned. The important question is the effect on literature of the changes in the publisher's position. And here, it is fairly plain, there are grounds for uneasiness. There are signs—as witness two recent cases in the courts—that the hectic competition among publishers is supplying a powerful stimulus to the production of a weakly sensational type of book, which could hardly have come into existence under the conditions prevailing a generation ago. On the other hand, it is becoming more difficult than ever to secure a publisher for important works of a more or less learned character, which cannot hope to command a

\* Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.

profitable circulation. To quote Mr. Unwin once more:—

"In olden days nearly all the better firms of publishers considered themselves under an obligation to issue such books so far as their means justified them in so doing. It was often possible for them to do much in this way to foster learning, because if any of their more popular books were particularly successful the bulk of the profits came their way. To-day, with sliding-scale royalties, the author reaps the fruit of any exceptional success. This is quite as it should be, but it sets a very definite limit upon what even the most public-spirited publisher can do in the way of financing unprofitable undertakings."

The problem, however, of the large learned work is that of how the necessary subsidy is to be provided. There is another desirable form of publication for which the existing facilities seem strangely limited—the serious pamphlet or short booklet dealing with a subject of comparatively wide appeal. On general grounds, one might expect that this medium would be highly popular. The length of a pamphlet represents roughly the maximum that can be read with sustained attention at a single sitting; and one would suppose that this would appeal to a public which likes its sermons and its speeches short. On the other hand, there must be many men who have something of great value to say, which they could write easily enough within the limits of a pamphlet, but who have neither the time nor the inclination to attempt a larger work. Yet, in practice, it is harder to get a short pamphlet published and to get it read than a book of three times its size; so much so that almost every week books appear, containing excellent material for a pamphlet, which would seem to have been padded out for no other reason than to make it possible to publish them as books of standard size. One does not have to look far, of course, for reasons to explain this phenomenon. Pamphlets do not get reviewed as commonly as books do. The bookseller does not care to handle them, since, being cheap, the discount which he gets on them works out at very little. The reader finds it difficult to keep a slim pamphlet, and to lay his hands on it when he wants it. None the less, these reasons seem insufficient to justify a state of things under which authors must often write and readers read at greater length than either desires. There seems a deficiency in our publishing arrangements, the fault of nobody in particular, analogous to the deficiency in our banking arrangements, again the fault of no one in particular, which leaves British savings to find their way into British industry (for long investment) through such devious and expensive channels.

This brings us to the final point. If ever there was an industry which offered scope for an intensive campaign of what is called "co-operative advertising," and which could undertake such a campaign with the consciousness that it was serving not its own interests only, but the highest human good, it is the industry of books:—

"Most people," writes Mr. Unwin, "have not yet learned to regard books as a necessity. They will beg them, they will borrow them, they will do everything, in fact, but buy them. People who would be ashamed to cadge for anything else they wanted, who will unhesitatingly pay 8s. 6d. apiece for a dozen gramophone records, or 12s. 6d. each for stalls at a theatre, will think twice, if not three times, before spending even 5s. upon a book which will last a lifetime. The fact that we in England do not spend on books—per head of population—anything approaching the amount spent by the population of New Zealand, and that, relatively speaking, we have not nearly so many booksellers' shops, demonstrates that, despite the increase in demand since the war, there is still ample room for expansion."

The truth of this is undeniable. The instinctive assumption that to buy a book, when you may perhaps

get a chance of reading it without buying it, is a wanton extravagance, is surprisingly widespread. It ought not to be beyond the power of propaganda to eradicate it from many minds, for it is both an absurd and an anti-social convention. Most ordinarily well-to-do persons would find that they had not spent an alarming portion of their income upon books if they bought every one (novels apart) which there was any likelihood of their dipping into. The sense of an obligation to support a good cause, to which people respond so readily in other connections, might well extend to the purchase of books from which the reader feels that he has derived benefit. The growth of the circulating library lends importance to the establishment of a sound convention in this matter. The circulating library might be an invaluable aid to discriminating book-buying. It is too apt to prove a substitute for it.

We have attempted to explore only a small part of a very large field; we shall invite the aid of others to go more fully into the subject in succeeding issues.

## CRUISERS AND DISARMAMENT

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE'S proposal for a Five-Power Conference on limitation of the lighter naval types reflects an impatience with the prolonged discussions of the Preparatory Commission which is shared by many people in this country. The success of the Washington Conference in limiting battle-fleets has had one unfortunate result; it has created the illusion that armament limitation is a comparatively easy business if only it is approached with good will. Yet the President's proposals themselves remind us that both Washington and Rome failed to solve the problem of the lighter types. This does not mean that the problem is insoluble; it does mean that it presents greater difficulties than battleship limitation, and an examination of those difficulties will illustrate the kind of questions with which the Preparatory Commission has to wrestle.

The truth is that, while "Disarmament," in the strict sense of the word, is a very simple matter, "Limitation of Armaments" is a very complex one. If all the nations of the world were converted to Quaker principles, or were convinced that a future war had become impossible, they could abolish their navies, armies, and air forces by a stroke of the pen. Limitation of armaments, on the contrary, implies that war remains a possible, though it may be an increasingly improbable, contingency. Its object is to diminish the likelihood of war, by eliminating armament competition, while leaving to each country such forces as shall constitute at least a strong deterrent to attack. It implies that no country shall be allowed to be the sole judge of its own requirements, or to aim at a provocative preponderance of force; but it implies also that no country shall feel its vital interests to be unduly exposed. To evolve a scheme which fulfils these conflicting requirements entails patient and laborious discussion. It calls for a hard head as well as a good heart.

The problem of battleship limitation was comparatively easy, because a logical basis for the scheme could be found in a simple arithmetical ratio. The problem of the lighter types is more difficult because a simple arithmetical ratio will not suffice. It is a distinct weakness in the President's proposals that he suggests such a ratio as the basis of discussion.

The reason for this distinction lies in the functions that the ships have to perform. Broadly speaking, it is

the function of the battleship to contest and secure, of the cruiser to exercise, control. Battleships act, not in units or detachments, but in fleets; they must be held concentrated at a point within striking distance of the enemy's main force, and their number will have a direct relation to the number of ships that the enemy can put into the line of battle. The strength of navies in capital ships can quite fairly be assessed by counting units, and it was possible for the Washington Conference to evolve a simple arithmetical formula, expressing with perfect accuracy the battle strength assigned to each of the signatory Powers.

Each battle-fleet requires a proportion of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines to act as scouts and auxiliaries, and if this were the only duty of the lighter craft, their number could logically be proportioned to the strength of the battle-fleets themselves. But, working under the protection of the battle-fleets, there must be cruisers and other light craft to exercise control of the seas by the attack and defence of trade, by escorting troopships, or by participation in coastal operations. These functions necessitate dispersal, not concentration of force, and the number required is dictated rather by the work to be done than by the strength of the opposition.

This is particularly true of the defence of trade—and herein lies the chief British objection to the extension of the battleship ratio to the lighter types. In every naval programme the influence of some dominant national interest can be traced. For Japan, it is the safety of the China Seas; the security of her vital interests in China, Manchuria, and Korea. For France it is the freedom of her long coast-line from incursions, and the communications with her North African colonies. For Great Britain the overmastering preoccupation must always be the safety of the ocean trade routes, and, more especially, the Atlantic approaches, where those routes converge on the British Isles. Dependent as all great industrial States have become on seaborne trade, the dependence of Great Britain remains exceptional, in that she draws two-thirds of her food supplies from overseas.

Sporadic warfare against commerce can thus inflict on Great Britain a far greater degree of loss and suffering than on any other Power, and the whole experience of the late war shows that the force required for the defence of trade must be proportioned, not to the number of the assailants, but to the volume of trade to be protected. Raiders attacking trade act by dispersal and evasion; the seas are wide and, within certain limits, they can choose the time and place of their attack. It was not the number of submarines operating in the Atlantic that dictated the allocation of cruisers and destroyers to escort duty, but the number of convoys it was necessary to run, in order to leave no important section of the trade unprotected.

Invasion or blockade of the British Isles is impossible without the defeat of the British main fleet; but an enemy greatly inferior in general naval strength might easily develop an attack that would compel us to put the bulk of our trade into convoy in the Atlantic approaches, where it is most vulnerable. It is this necessity, it would seem, rather than a ship-for-ship comparison with other navies, that should form the logical basis of the cruiser and destroyer strength allowed to Great Britain. No one who has studied the history of the convoy system in the late war is likely to assert that our present cruiser strength, after providing the eyes of the fleet, is excessive for this purpose.

A numerical equality with the United States would thus involve a very real inferiority in strength, for the American foreign trade, lucrative as it may be, is of infinitely less vital importance to the national life; and much of it

could be temporarily abandoned in time of war, setting free a large cruiser force for offensive operations. War with America is, happily, not a contingency we take seriously into account. All that is here suggested is that the 5 : 5 : 3 ratio, as applied to lighter craft, provides no logical basis for limitation.

To other countries, other needs. We should probably be content to see France with a submarine tonnage in excess of our own. It is not (he thanks Heaven) the business of the present writer to fix or assess relative strengths. The purpose of this article is simply to suggest that, while the strength of the Powers in some forms of armament may properly be assessed on a purely numerical basis, there are others which can only be allocated fairly on a detailed and reasoned examination of the principal functions each country requires them to perform; and that those who urge special claims for their own country are not necessarily hypocritical or lukewarm in their pacific professions. The first step to solving a problem is to define it; the first step to agreement is for each party to table a clear statement of his case. The prolonged technical discussions of the Preparatory Commission give better hopes of relief from the menace of armament competition than any well-intentioned short cut.

C. ERNEST FAYLE.

## INDUSTRIAL CHANGES IN THE MIDLANDS

RECENTLY a good deal of emphasis has been laid on the significance of the changes which are said to have been taking place since the War in the structure of British industry, and which, it is declared, have affected both the relative importance of the various trades and their regional distribution. It is claimed that the old staple industries are in some measure giving place to a number of newer manufactures, and that there is a marked tendency for this country to become concerned mainly with finishing processes rather than as in the nineteenth century with all the stages of manufacture, particularly in the metal group. It may not be out of place, therefore, to look back into the immediate past to see if, in the light of this theory, the origins of any such transformation can be discerned; for it is necessary at the outset to satisfy oneself that this depression in the staple industries, accompanied as it is by great activity in others, is not merely the result of the disproportionate increase in the productive capacity of the former which occurred during the War. The question is, in fact, whether there are grounds for supposing that the present period is really one of transformation and not merely of readjustment. A fruitful method of inquiry into this problem is to examine the recent trend of events in particular industrial areas, and the history of the West Midland District, which may be regarded as including not only Birmingham and the manufacturing towns of Warwickshire, but also the whole of the Black Country, provides some very valuable indications of the existence of new industrial tendencies.

It is probable that when the economic historians of the future survey the history of the last seventy or eighty years they will seize upon two periods as being of special significance. They will first point to the great depression, which lasted from the middle 'seventies, broken only by a brief period of prosperity, till 1885, as providing the industrial watershed between nineteenth and twentieth-century England; and they will then go on to emphasize the fact that the Great War was the event which, of all others,

did most to confirm the direction of the new stream of forces, and which thus had a part in the "new industrial revolution" comparable to that played by the Napoleonic Wars in the first. The Birmingham District will appear to have been during both "revolutions" peculiarly sensitive to the forces of change. It is a district which attained a high degree of industrial development comparatively early in the modern era; its rise coincided with the growth in the relative importance of the metal trades; and it seems that the new industrial tendencies, which were scarcely apparent elsewhere until stimulated by the War, affected this area much sooner than they did the northern centres of industry.

In the 'sixties and early 'seventies of last century the forces which had created the industrial greatness of the Birmingham District reached their most triumphant expression. South Staffordshire was still the most important centre of the iron industry, especially of malleable iron production, upon which the British supremacy in the metal trades had until then rested. And while the production of coal, iron and heavy iron goods was the main concern of the Black Country, Birmingham itself and a number of neighbouring towns and villages were chiefly engaged in the manufacture of a wide variety of small metal wares. The most important of these were guns, jewellery, pens, buttons, bedsteads, brassfoundry, and a thousand small products of the foundry, stamp and press. At that time highly composite articles were few. Then, between 1874 and 1885, the decade of the depression, the activities of the area entered upon a period of transformation. The coming of steel crippled the great iron industry; while many of the foreign markets of the hardware trades were closed by the growth of native industries. The future of the district seemed far from bright. Its deposits of coal and of iron were approaching exhaustion; and owing to the heavy transport charges to and from the coast it could not hope to compete in the production of steel with districts more favoured by situation. During the early 'eighties there began, in consequence, that migration of the heavy trades to the coast which has gone on ever since. Of all the great metallurgical centres the West Midlands have had, since then, the fewest advantages in respect of transport charges and proximity to raw materials; and so the area has to a large extent anticipated the change which has more recently affected British producers in situations of greater economic advantage. Yet it is interesting to notice that even though some of its most characteristic trades never recovered from the effects of the depression, the development of the district after 1886 was great and continuous. During the next twenty-five years it attracted to itself a multitude of new industries which were then appearing. It became a home of the electrical trades, of the motor and cycle industries, of the weldless tube trade, and an important centre of light engineering, of the chemical industry, and of food and drink manufacture. By 1914, indeed, Birmingham had ceased to be exclusively, or even chiefly, a hardware town, just as the Black Country was no longer predominantly a centre of iron production. The district was coming more and more to concern itself with a new group of industries, and was tending to become a centre for the production of highly composite articles and of the semi-finished materials necessary for their manufacture.

The War gave an immense stimulus to these tendencies. If the most marked result of the great depression had been to bring down the iron industry, the effect of the War was to cripple the hardware trades. The old staples, with a few important exceptions, have fallen from their pre-War position. The pin, needle, button, jewellery, gun, hollowware, pen, saddlery and harness trades have all

declined, and the local producers who before 1914 supplied them with their raw or semi-finished materials are now engaged largely in satisfying the demands of the newer industries. The rolling mills and the tube mills in the non-ferrous trade have found markets in the motor and motor accessories industries; while the weldless-steel tube trade, which in pre-War days was mainly concerned with boiler tubes for the shipbuilders, now looks to the cycle trade as its chief market. Many foundries which previously specialized on hollowware now devote themselves partly to the production of castings for the electrical and light engineering trades. The tanners and curriers of Walsall, who until recently sold almost exclusively to the local saddlers and harness makers, now produce leather for the coachbuilders; while their former customers, having lost their foreign markets, have changed over to the manufacture of fancy leather goods. Meanwhile, the food and drink trades have risen to greater prosperity, and in some of the old centres of the iron trade, such as Wolverhampton and Dudley, industries of a type quite new to the area, such as the artificial silk and ready-made clothing industries, have been established. It is interesting to notice that the old brassfoundry trade has maintained itself largely because it supplies the sheltered industries, such as the building and the furniture trades, though even this trade has responded to the increasing demand for motor accessories. It is scarcely necessary to affirm that the whole transition has been facilitated by the rapid development of the motor and electrical industries more than by any other cause; for the products of these industries are of so complex a nature and make demands on such a variety of materials that opportunity has been presented to most of the multitudinous trades in the district to benefit by their expansion.

Thus the area which fifty years ago was mainly concerned with the production of iron and of hardware has now become associated with manufactures of a very different kind. As a centre for raw materials and semi-products it has now become of small importance. The famous thick seam coal of the Black Country is practically exhausted and fuel is brought from Cannock and elsewhere. The foundry iron used in the district comes from Derbyshire and Northamptonshire; and steel is brought from South Wales, Sheffield, or, in the case of certain industries, largely from Belgium. On the other hand, the small metal trades have been gravely injured by changes of habits and by the loss of foreign markets. Yet the prosperity of the area has been maintained by the rise of industries engaged in producing motors, cycles, rubber, artificial silk, electrical equipment, machine tools, wireless apparatus, food, and drink. These products are all of a highly finished kind, and many of them of a composite nature. They have, moreover, required large plants for their manufacture, and the small unit, once characteristic of the Birmingham District, has become less so as the hardware trades have declined.

There can be no doubt, then, that as far as the West Midlands are concerned a radical change in economic structure has actually occurred; and this, it appears, has been achieved with less economic friction than might have been expected. If, as it is claimed, the same modifying forces are now making themselves generally felt in this country, it may be hoped that British industry as a whole will prove as sensitive to the new tendencies as the section of it which has here been considered. If industrialists are to weather the period of transition without great loss, however, it is of first importance that they should now become conscious of the necessity for adaptation and should realize that it is not an essential condition of prosperity that the future structure of British industry should be identical with its past.

G. C. ALLEN.

## AT ST. STEPHEN'S "RULERS OR RABBITS?"

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

**A**FTER the mild excitement of the Debate on the Address, the House this year, as ever, has passed into the dulllest period of the session. During this period it is occupied with two things. The bulk of the time is given to so-called "Supplementary Estimates"; the remainder to what is humorously called the rights of private members, on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings reserved for private motions, and the Fridays for private Bills. Supplementary Estimates in the old days, when obstruction was desirable, used to be of some interest, not from the matter discussed, but as a dialectic duel between the Secretary of the Treasury on the one hand and the Opposition on the other. The latter would raise points of argument in order to delay business. The former would prevent these points being raised, or disarm them by friendly and amiable words. This obstruction was undertaken, of course, in order to prevent the big Government Bills of the session being brought forward; or, if it could not prevent, to delay them. But it is obvious in this present session that no such motive animates the minds of the few who engage in dolorous wrangles. There are no big Bills to be introduced during this session. The Opposition and all private members of Parliament have been "bribed" by the promise of Mr. Baldwin that, without any such Bills, the House will rise towards the end of July. Any prolonged delay in business, therefore, merely means that members will have to stay another week or fortnight in the height of the summer when all members, and especially the poorer members, wish to get away for the August holidays with their families. Therefore the old method of obstruction has altogether vanished, and, as the popular newspapers have practically ceased to report Parliamentary business, there is nothing to be gained by the eating of time in this way.

Most members of Parliament, and most persons outside, have no conception of what the debates on these Supplementary Estimates really mean, and many members who know what they really mean, pretend otherwise. You cannot discuss, on these requests for additional monies to grants or subsidies which have already been given, the principle of the original grants or subsidies. Thus, for example, if Parliament last year voted £5 for some object and the Supplementary Estimate asks for another £5, you cannot discuss the original object for which the £5 was granted; you can only discuss why another £5 is requested. And as in most cases this additional money is required, not by any alteration of policy, but by an automatic increase or an under-estimate of what was really required for the purpose voted a year ago, the debate is confined within very narrow limits. Members experienced this in the discussion last week on the Sugar Beet increased Supplementary Estimate. The increase was purely automatic, owing to the fact that so much subsidy had been granted for so much sugar beet grown, and that more sugar beet had been grown than was estimated. The result was not a debate on the whole principle whether a subsidy should be given for growing sugar beet, but a long series of wrangles with the Chairman, who intervened thirty or forty times to prevent such a discussion; in order that the thing should be limited to strictly Parliamentary procedure. It is difficult to be eloquent, humorous, impressive, or intelligent upon such a narrow point of view, and the result is that the House has been nearly empty and that the galleries are only half-filled by spectators who are content to stay for less than an hour and go away in astonishment at hearing and seeing the Mother of Parliaments.

Then on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Fridays, the private member is supposed to have his day, and there is always great resentment when the Government takes these days for their own business. But, as a matter of fact, the private member has no "day" at all. If he is successful in the ballot for a motion, he presents a motion which exactly resembles the motions at the Oxford and Cambridge Unions. It may be a motion concerning anything under the

sun. Last week and this we have had "discussions" on House of Lords Reform, on Secondary Education, and on Co-operative Selling in the Coal Mining Industry. As a matter of fact these academic debates, being after 8.15 p.m., are not reported in the newspapers. The fortunate, or unfortunate, member who has drawn what is called the luck of the ballot, and introduces his motion, finds himself at 8.15 p.m. addressing an audience of ten or fifteen members when the rest have gone to dine. And although there may be a division at the end, the division has no effect on legislation or indeed on any single person's opinion in the House. Most wise men take these Tuesdays and Wednesdays for dinner parties or political engagements, or anything but listening to the rather dreary and irrelevant orations on absurd topics in the House of Commons!

The only opportunity of the so-called private members for producing joyful rhetoric is on Fridays, which are reserved for private members' Bills. These also are dependent on a ballot in which some thirteen members are lucky, and some three hundred members fail. Last Friday, for example, was one of the most jolly debates of the session, although, with the discussion beginning at eleven o'clock in the morning, the mover can only obtain a scanty audience, and although it is exceedingly improbable that the private member will ever get his Bill passed into law. Mr. Mitchell Banks, the popular barrister, who possesses a certain seat in Swindon (owing to the fact that the Liberal and Labour supporters, who are about equally divided, hate each other more than they hate him, and will always present him with the seat by a minority vote of thousands), frankly threw over any idea of introducing a Bill which he could pilot through Parliament, in order to indulge in an enormous "rag" and introduce a measure bearing the attractive title of "Foreign Contributions (Interference with Trade and Industries) Bill." This was a Bill ostensibly to prevent subscriptions being obtained from foreign sources in the furtherance of industrial disputes in this country. It was designed, of course, to *épater les proletariens* before whose representatives Mr. Banks trailed his coat in the most genial and provocative manner. But it was also designed to "rag" his own Government, and I suppose no one was more pleased than he when the Bill was thrown out at the end of the afternoon. The *proletariens* refused to be *épaté*, and for the most part stayed away, though one or two dreary speakers took the thing seriously. But in a short space of time this brilliant lawyer, who, but for the claims of his own profession, might at the present time be a member of the Government, managed to introduce a variety of quotations and epigrams which were received with delight by the audience who listened to him. "A man who takes pecuniary assistance from his wife's admirer is either a fool or a knave. He is a fool if he does not see the motive, and he is a knave if he connives at it." "They take money not from people who want to support them, but from people who want to supplant them." He quoted Burke: "Even England is within the comprehensive scheme of their malignant charity"; and, ragging the amazing "Jix," "... he issues to his constituents and others some formidable excommunications, and they have about as much effect on the recipients as the Papal Bulls had on Queen Elizabeth." He told the Postmaster-General that instead of putting the Socialists with their backs to the wall he ought to be backing his Bill, and concluded with the statement that, when dissolution came, the query of the country would be: "We provided you with a record majority—have you done your duty? Have you been rulers or have you been rabbits?" The House decided in favour of the rabbit rather than the ruler, by a majority of nearly three to one, and everyone went away pleased. The only man in the debate who took it in the right spirit was a very independent Labour member, Mr. Rose, who asked whether it would not be perfectly right for the Licensed Victuallers of Great Britain to say that they would not draw another pint of beer until both hon. members for Dundee solemnly agreed to open all their public meetings with the Froth Blowers' Anthem; or for the amalgamated bootleggers of New York and ten miles out to assist their British brethren by monetary contributions. The debate on the reform of the Lords, of course, produced nothing, and no one ever imagined it would, the

Government being only too anxious not to have anything to do with the matter. The debate on Secondary Education produced good speeches which may be reported in educational journals, but otherwise was entirely futile.

In general conversation I find the majority of the Conservative members getting more and more wishful that they had not been rushed into anti-Trade-Union legislation. I think this will come to nothing at all but a mild form of affirmation that a general strike is illegal. But the Government's opponents will still be able to assert that they contemplate attacking trade unions.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

**M**OST Liberals of my acquaintance are satisfied with Mr. Masterman's slogan for the party. "A Fresh Start" is what is emphatically demanded, and the way is now clear. The harmonious election of an organizing committee, thoroughly representative of the sources of Liberal strength and with a strong leavening of youth, furnishes us with an executive body prepared to give the go-by to intestine strife and to get on with the job in heart and hope. The appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel as the party's business manager is thoroughly popular. He has the valuable qualification of detachment from the unhappy quarrel of the last three years; he is efficient, hard-working, and a good Radical. He and his committee will have the disposal of a good income available without any other condition than that it shall be applied to Liberal ends. What more do we want? Only that those who cannot help should not hinder the Liberals, young and old, who have refused to despair, or to run for shelter in alien camps. A cynic remarked to me the other day "The trouble is that everybody needs Liberalism, but nobody wants it." This may pass as a fairly smart epigram. The important thing is that the country does desperately need Liberalism, and as the menace grows of naked class war, will need it more and more. If Liberals can only pull themselves together and show the will to succeed, the country will want them and see that they get them in Parliament.

Detached observers of the Labour Party are more and more astonished at its power of cohesion. One would think that it must before long fly into disparate atoms, so violent are the dissensions that tear it below that remarkable surface. The differences in the Liberal Party are concord in comparison. At the Albert Hall demonstration on China, for example, one saw Mr. MacDonald, after making a perfectly respectable speech, listening with a diplomatic absence of expression on his face while a fierce Left Winger from Glasgow delivered a provocative harangue, with every word of which he notoriously disagreed. The façade the Labour Party presents to the world is a sham façade: it does not correspond to the architectural structure: and yet the crazy erection holds together. The divisions are vital and irreconcilable. Hear Mr. C. T. Cramp, the railwayman's leader, an able moderate, on the two schools among the Socialists. "One school believed that that end" (socialistic production) "could be best achieved by ruining the various industries first, by making them so unremunerative that they fell into the hands of the State. The other believed that the industries should be made efficient while they continued to try to get them into the hands of the State." He added a wise word about the folly of "conquering an ash-heap." Could there be a more dramatic collision of theory? "Labour" covers both schools with a show of insincere impartiality—and a dozen other "schools" as well.

The fierce light of publicity that beats upon Kenya Colony is at first sight rather puzzling. Why should this not very important colony be so much more prominent in the news and the discussions than any other region in the vast expanse of our possessions? I put this to a Liberal friend who specializes on the African colonies, and he replied to the following effect. Kenya is specially interesting because this sparsely populated country—it is larger than France—has become the strategic battleground of two irreconcilable policies in the treatment of the native. According to one view—roughly, the settlers' view—the best hope for the native is that he should work for the white man—in short, that he should be commercialized or industrialized. According to the other view, the native should be helped to become a producer on his own land—a peasant proprietor. This second view prevails at present throughout the West African colonies. It is known in Kenya as "the West African heresy." In Kenya, and, I think, in Kenya alone, is there a powerful and well-entrenched party of settlers who are determined to save the native by the gospel of work (for the settlers). Hence the peculiar importance of Kenya as the place where our guardianship of the native is being tested. Fortunately for the more liberal and humane view the Kenya settlers are butting their heads against the famous declaration of the Duke of Devonshire. This noble pronouncement needs to be "implemented" by carrying the principle of Trusteeship into practice. There should be in Kenya, as in other parts of Africa, some arrangement whereby the native lands are vested in a Trust charged with their protection from the maw of predacious interests, and with the education and encouragement of the Africans as growers and farmers of our raw produce.

So Mr. Elihu Root has joined the ranks of those great men who have had the thrill of reading their own obituary notices. The experience must be more exciting than pleasant. One obituary contained two rather startlingly diverse verdicts. Mr. Roosevelt in his flamboyant manner described Mr. Root as "the greatest man that has appeared in the public life of any country, in any position, on either side of the ocean, in my day and generation." That is very handsome. A little further down the column there is an estimate of Mr. Root as a Corporation lawyer in which it is remarked that "it was brought up against him, with perfect truth, that he had supplied the brains for some of the most discreditable enterprises of the great companies." A Trust magnate, Mr. W. C. Whitney, is quoted as praising Mr. Root as "the first lawyer I ever had who could always tell me how to do legally what we wanted to do." This, I suppose, is what one may call balanced biography. You take your choice between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. W. C. Whitney.

A highly valued correspondent sends me the following with an invitation to comment upon it. I feel, as the orators say, that comment is superfluous: "You frequently and very feelingly deplore the ill-luck of the Liberal cause. . . . Well, this morning, still hoping that there had been no accident in Shanghai, I hurried to get my (Liberal) newspaper as it arrived at the letter-box. Its principal news-page instantly alarmed me. It literally shouted Shanghai. One heading went the whole width of the page. What had happened? I carefully examined the cables of the special correspondent. And all that sensational type rested on these two facts: that their correspondent had written his message beside a man in khaki who worked, as a journalist, with a Webley beside him; and that some children had thrown stones at British soldiers, but that the soldiers had 'maintained excellent discipline.' The fact

that Mr. Chen had signed the agreement with us was quite obscured. What was important, apparently, was that a nervous journalist was working with a gun beside him, and that our troops stood firm when rude children threw stones at them. Cherry stones? Nut shells? All this stuff to a public which still remembers, I suppose, the nights of the maroons, and the British troops who lost 60,000 men in fifteen minutes one first of July not so many years ago. Does the public really demand its news in that form? Or is it mental deficiency in journalists? And what is its effect on the Liberal cause? "

There is a touch of cruel irony in a report from the New York book sales recording that £285 has been given for a first edition of poor Gissing's "Workers in the Dawn." There is nothing new at this time of day in the fact, so cynically displayed here, that the value of a great writer, in the conventional sense, usually begins when he is dead, and his sufferings well over. This is a commonplace which has furnished forth a thousand moralizings. It is really unfair to gird at the collector, whose only criterion of value is scarcity. The man who bought "Workers in the Dawn" for a price which would have kept Gissing happy for a long time, only wanted it to satisfy the acquisitive instinct. What is it to him that the writer was half-starved and utterly neglected? That is irrelevant to the game of men who hunt indifferently with fat cheques the book or the postage-stamp so long as it is rare. At the same time, this bit of news does seem to give a particularly bitter turn to an old complaint. If only it would become the fashion with rich men to speculate in the *living* writers of first books! Money might be lost, but genius might be saved.

The broadcasting of Conrad's "Lord Jim" some nights ago interested me as an attempt to work out a tolerable dramatic technique for the wireless. The starvation of the sense of sight is a terrible handicap to any form of wireless drama, and usually the substitutes provided in the way of noises are worse than useless. The kinema in its need to supply a substitute for the starved sense of hearing relies on the "caption," which is usually written in a barbarous tongue. "Lord Jim" came out surprisingly well, because the adapter had an intelligent scheme—the adaptation of film methods to the wireless. The success was such as one would never have thought possible, but hearing is believing. Marlow's narrative was given in Conrad's own melancholy exotic prose, and these passages framed, as it were, dramatic episodes in which peaks of action in the book were conveyed in the novelist's dialogue. The narrative prepared one's mind for the dramatic bits, explained them, and stimulated the imagination to "see" them.

Two replies are usually made to those who express disgust at the exhibition of caged wild birds. One is the usual charge of "sloppy sentimentalism." It is said that a nightingale in a cage is better fed and cared for in captivity than when it is struggling for life in the wood. There is also the usual argument that prohibition would interfere with an industry. It may be true that the English songsters that were seen by the score in little cages at the Crystal Palace recently were safer than if they were free. So is the man who is guarded from the perils of starvation by a life-sentence in prison. It is not sentiment only, but common sense that tells us that it is a piece of essential wickedness and cruelty to imprison creatures to whom movement is life. The thing may be argued pro and con, but seeing is believing, and I defy any decent person to come upon a young nightingale in a small cage, as I did last week, and to feel happy about it. As to interfering

with an industry, well, much of the work of Parliament is concerned with preventing people making money out of wrong. The legal position is difficult and involved, but it is clear that there is a gap in the network of protective legislation which allows men to trap wild birds and to deal in them with impunity. It is extraordinarily difficult to prove that the existing law has been broken, though everyone knows that bird-catching—even on the fringe of the sanctuaries—is a common thing. I hope the Government will bring in again, and pass, the Bill which would make bird-catching an offence. The case is different with birds like canaries, which are bred in captivity. It would be only decent to stop the commercial exploitation of our wild English birds.

Attempts are often made to define optimism by illustration. May I enter for the competition the postmen at Shanghai now on strike, who have been seen posting their own letters?

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED PRICE-LEVELS

SIR,—In your last issue, Mr. D. T. Jack endeavours to work out some figures for the U.S. to compare sheltered and unsheltered price-levels, corresponding to those which I published for the U.K. in your issue of February 12th. He thinks that his figures show that the relative movements have been much the same in the two countries, and asks whether this conclusion would affect my argument.

There is first of all the question of statistical fact. I depended on a fairly wide range of known figures, some of which appeared explicitly in my table, and others of which corroborated these. Those which appeared explicitly included wages and cost of living. Those which corroborated the general conclusion suggested by these figures, namely, that the sheltered value of sterling had remained practically unchanged during the last thirty months, included "rent, rates, cost of social insurance, railway charges, and the various items on either side of the National Budget which are practically fixed in terms of money." For the U.S. Mr. Jack cites only the cost of living figures. For these he has no data later than June, 1926. Over the twenty-four months for which he has figures, it appears that, whilst, as one would expect, their movements both up and down have been smaller and slower than those of wholesale prices, their relative position has been practically unchanged, namely (to repeat his quarterly and half-yearly figures of the ratio of sheltered prices to unsheltered in U.S.), 117, 115, 110, 110, 114, 115. During the period in which the U.S. ratio of sheltered prices to unsheltered, as calculated by Mr. Jack, moved from 117 to 115, the U.K. ratio, as also calculated by him, moved from 104 to 116. These figures do not support his contention that the relative price-movements have been much the same in U.S. as in U.K. Such plausibility as his conclusion has is, therefore, mainly derived from the figure which—since the actual figure is not yet available—he has had to invent for December, 1926. If this figure proves to be correct, then it will be true that the cost of living in U.S. has agreed with that in the U.K. in not following wholesale prices downwards during the twelve months of 1926. At present even this result is hypothetical and unproved. By inventing a different figure for December, 1926, he could have produced an opposite result.

Suppose, however, that the figure of the U.S. cost of living when known supports Mr. Jack's anticipations, and suppose that the other indicators of sheltered values in U.S. which he does not know would, if known, tend to the same conclusion, would these facts, if realized, affect my argument? Not materially, in my opinion.

In the first place they would not affect the conclusion that the disequilibrium caused by the return to gold remains uncorrected. In the second place, they would show, at the

most, that those of our manufactured exports which compete with similar exports from the U.S. are not at a greater disadvantage than they were a year ago. The U.S., however, is not our chief competitor in our staple export trades; and a considerable part of the U.S. exports consist of the raw materials and agricultural products, the price of which is reflected rather by the fall in the wholesale index number than by the steadiness of the cost-of-living index number.

Mr. Jack would have produced a stronger and better established case if he had pointed out that the gold cost-of-living in Germany, France, Italy, and Belgium rose during 1926, in spite of a fall of wholesale prices, largely as the result of financial measures, analogous to ours, affecting currency and the exchanges. These measures have undoubtedly improved our competitive position relatively to theirs, especially in the case of France. On the other hand, prior to this, our relative disadvantage was overwhelming.

To summarize the net result on our relative position of all the international price changes of the last eighteen months affecting the products of our customers on the one hand and of our competitors on the other, is impossible in any precise terms. I was not attempting this; I had not overlooked the European deflations when I concluded that, in our own case, the position as regards equilibrium between our sheltered and unsheltered price-levels "is assuredly no better than it was eighteen months ago." Of course, this is not the only factor in the situation. Indeed, one of my principal conclusions was the possibility of our return to prosperity, though not to our previous scale of exports, without ever restoring the old equilibrium.—Yours, &c.,

J. M. KEYNES.

King's College, Cambridge.

February 19th, 1927.

### EQUAL FRANCHISE

SIR,—It is somewhat of a surprise to me to find the Parliamentary Correspondent of so up-to-date a paper as THE NATION referring ironically to the completion of the enfranchisement of women as "that encouraging subject of votes for young women which, if granted, would finally swamp the male electorate."

The question is not merely one of votes for young women. Whole classes of women are *de facto* disfranchised under the present system (*e.g.*, school teachers, hospital nurses, domestic servants, wage-earners residing with their parents), simply because they have not the technical qualification of "occupation." Even the Conservative Government has undertaken to give votes to women on the same terms as men. One can but hope that your Parliamentary Correspondent's attitude is not typical of that of Liberal men in general. Liberal women are unanimous in demanding the Reform. Several vital Liberal principles are at stake—the equality of all citizens in the eyes of the law; the right of each citizen to a say as to who shall make the laws and levy the taxes which he or she has to obey and pay; personality not property as the basis of electoral rights.

As to the poor old tag: "swamping the male electorate," need we have that bogey trotted out again? There has been no sign of a massed or organized female vote. One might really as well argue that as there are more voters outside than within the ages of thirty to forty, therefore voters within those ages are swamped. Anyhow, is it not mere justice that as there are more females than males who obey the laws, who suffer under bad social conditions, and benefit by good conditions, and who each have a stake in the affairs of the nation, so there should be a proportionate number of votes as between males and females?

There is some ground for holding that the slump in the fortunes of the Liberal Party dates from their dubious and often obstructive attitude towards the women's suffrage movement before the war. That lost us, to my knowledge, the services of many of the most brilliant and ardent political women of our day. The Liberal revival which is now a real possibility must depend not on loyalty to any particular person but on loyalty to essential Liberal principles.—Yours, &c.,

ELEANOR ACLAND.

Killerton.

February 21st, 1927.

### BRITISH FILMS

SIR,—I trust you will be able on further consideration of the subject to modify the somewhat contemptuous tone in which you refer in your article "After Two Years" to the proposed Bill "to encourage the production" "of British Films" and particularly the half-veiled suggestion you make that the Bill be withdrawn.

Whatever may have been the motives of the Government in preparing the Bill, even if it was only a vague hankering after anything that savoured of Protection, such a measure should be welcomed as an inevitable first step, if a substantial industry of film production is to be established in Britain at all, while the present turgid flood of American films continues. The Bill does no more than clear the ring for such a film production business to get going with a chance of paying its way and so continuing its existence—it does far less than the Government have already done under the Trade Facilities Act otherwise to assist the infant Beet Sugar Industry.

The wisdom of establishing a film producing industry in this country should hardly, I think, be open to question. If it were, the article by Mr. Keynes on the same page provides the answer. He urges the view (and calls in aid the also weighty authority of Mr. McKenna) that assuming a considerable proportion of our pre-war export trade is lost we must seek to replace it and find work for our million unemployed *inter alia* by creating new home industries. I consider the establishing of a substantial volume of British film production would be just such an industry. Apart from employing actors and other workers of the higher grades, it would provide much employment for many classes of manual workers. If the proposed Bill passes, I estimate that even in the early stages, not less than two million pounds a year would be spent on making British Films, and almost the whole of that would go in wages and salaries. There are no physical difficulties in making good films in this country, and the "quota" which the proposed Bill is assumed to provide would give the industry a chance of getting itself established.

France and Germany have both already got such a substantial volume of native film production as it is hoped by the Bill to secure in Britain. Both these countries, owing to the difference of language, mental outlook, and tastes of their peoples from those prevailing in Hollywood, and the consequent friendly feeling of their peoples for the native as opposed to the American product, have been able to oppose a strong, though invisible and sentimental, barrier to the flood of American product which has submerged and almost obliterated the native British production, deprived as it is of protection from difference of language or substantial difference of racial outlook. Germany with characteristic thoroughness further fortified her producers against the American flood by a Kontingent (or quota) requiring that for every foreign film distributed a native picture must be produced and distributed. The result has been that there is now produced in Germany from six to eight times the number of films produced in Britain, and that she receives only one-third to one-half of the number of American films that are dumped into this country. She has also been able to develop a body of artistic and technical skill in film production that is the subject of admiration in all quarters, and compels even Hollywood (with all the skill that the wealth drawn from a world market enables it to buy and put behind its film production) to sit at her feet and take lessons. Many of us who have had experience and studied the subject think that with the assistance a British quota (although not anything so large as Germany's Kontingent) would provide, Britain could get an output of pictures, in a short time, as large as Germany's and eventually as good in quality. This is no unreasonable assumption when it is considered Britain would have an advantage denied to Germany and France in that the same conditions which make American pictures so readily acceptable in England must, conversely, make British pictures readily acceptable in the enormous and profitable market America provides, once we have created the conditions enabling good quality pictures to be made here.

America's export trade undoubtedly benefits greatly by the persistent though doubtless unintended propaganda that her films circulating throughout the world provide for her

manufactures. Britain's drooping exports require any stimulus that a volume of British-made pictures circulating throughout the world would provide. That would be a consequential effect of the establishing of a substantial volume of film production in England, and has been so recognized by our leading manufacturers who, through the F.B.I., have been working for over two years now to secure it. This Bill is in the considered opinion of those able to judge, the essential preliminary to the re-establishing of the film production industry in Britain on a serious scale. As such I hope it will be treated seriously by the politicians when they come to deal with it, and that films and film production will not be treated, as I fear they have been in the past—and as your article suggests they may be again—as a subject *pour rire*.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN MAXWELL.

173, Wardour Street.  
February 18th, 1927.

### BIRTH CONTROL

SIR,—With reference to Mrs. Enid Eve's letter in your issue of February 12th, I was personally aware of the transfer of Dr. Marie Stopes's birth-control clinic from Holloway to Tottenham Court Road, but there are thousands of poor and harassed women in St. Pancras who have never heard of Dr. Stopes or her clinic, and it is to these that the St. Pancras Birth Control League is endeavouring to bring some measure of relief. While welcoming the aid that a clinic in Tottenham Court Road may give to those in its neighbourhood, Holborn, and East St. Marylebone, I would respectfully point out to Mrs. Eve that the heart of St. Pancras is Camden Town and

Kentish Town, and that those poor and congested areas are altogether unprovided for by a clinic located in the extreme south of this immense borough. I am rather amused at Mrs. Eve's *ex cathedra* declaration that "no new organizations are required for this purpose" in St. Pancras—a declaration which only shows her ignorance of the problem that lies before her and us. May I add, sir, that your kindness in publishing my letter on February 5th has put me in touch with quite a number of friends whose encouragement and help are a complete antidote to Mrs. Eve's ill-timed and arrogant communication.—Yours, &c.,

MARGARET CHAPMAN,

Chairman, St. Pancras Birth Control League.  
1, Brookfield, West Hill, Highgate, N.6.  
February 14th, 1927.

### PRONUNCIATION

SIR,—In your issue of February 19th, we notice in the column headed "Plays and Pictures" the remark that it is quite inexcusable to introduce an "r" where it does not belong. One of the instances given is the phrase "stor and provender." No one could deplore more than ourselves this mistake, when it *does* occur; but we would submit that in the above example it is not only legitimate, but also imperative to pronounce the "r," which is surely an organic part of the word.—Yours, &c.,

L. P. WILKINSON.  
P. C. THORNTON.

["Omicron" writes: "I entirely agree with your correspondents. 'Stor' was a slip of my pen for 'straw.'"]

### GEORGE GISSING\*

By VIRGINIA WOOLF.

"DO you know there are men in London who go the round of the streets selling paraffin oil?" wrote George Gissing in the year 1880, and the phrase calls up a world of fog and fourwheelers, of link-boys with flares, of slatternly landladies, of struggling men of letters, of gnawing domestic misery, of gloomy back streets and ignoble yellow chapels above which, distant but distinct, as on a clear day one may see some tree-crowned height above the city, rise the columns of the Parthenon and the hills of Rome. For Gissing is one of those imperfect novelists through whose books one sees a face, rather than work. With such writers we establish a personal rather than an artistic relationship. We approach them through their lives as much as through their work, and when we take up Gissing's letters, which have character, but little wit and no brilliance to illumine them, we feel that we are filling in a design which we began to trace out when we read "Demos" and "New Grub Street" and the "Nether World."

Yet here, too, there are gaps in plenty, dark places left unlit. Much information has been kept back, many facts necessarily omitted. The Gissings were poor, and their father died when they were children, and there were many of them, and they had to scrape together what education they could get. George, his sister said, had a passion for learning. He would rush off to school with a sharp herring bone in his throat for fear of missing his lesson. He would copy out from a little book called "That's It" the astonishing number of eggs that the tench lays and the sole lays and the carp lays, "because I think it is a fact worthy of attention." She remembers his "overwhelming veneration" for intellect, and how patiently, sitting beside her, the tall boy with the high white forehead and the short-sighted eyes would help her with her Latin,

\* "The Letters of George Gissing to members of his Family." Collected and arranged by Algernon and Ellen Gissing. (Constable. 18s.)

"giving the same explanation time after time without the least sign of impatience."

Partly because he so revered facts and had no faculty it seems (his language is meagre and unmetaphorical) for impressions, one wonders whether, since he had to make his living and was married unfortunately by the time he was twenty, his choice of a novelist's career was a happy one. There was the whole world, with its history and its literature, inviting him to haul it into his mind; he was eager; he was intellectual; yet he must sit down in hired rooms and spin novels about "earnest young people striving for improvement in, as it were, the dawn of a new phase of our civilization."

But the art of fiction is infinitely accommodating, and it was quite ready about the year 1880 to accept into its ranks a writer who wished to be the "mouthpiece of the advanced Radical Party," who was determined to show in his novels the ghastly condition of the poor, and the hideous injustice of society. The art of fiction was ready, that is, to agree that such books were novels; but it was doubtful if such novels would be read. Smith Elders' reader summed up the situation tersely. Mr. Gissing's novel, he wrote, "is too painful to please the ordinary novel reader, and treats of scenes that can never attract the subscribers to Mr. Mudie's Library." So, dining off lentils and hearing the men cry paraffin for sale in the streets of Islington, Gissing paid for the publication himself. It was then that he formed the habit of getting up at five in the morning in order to tramp half across London and coach Mr. M. before breakfast. Often enough Mr. M. sent down word that he was already engaged, and then another page was added to the dismal chronicle of life in modern "Grub Street." For here we run against one of those problems with which literature is sown so thick. The writer has dined upon lentils; he gets up at five; he walks across London; he finds M. still in bed, whereupon he

stands forth as the champion of life as it is, and proclaims that ugliness is truth, truth ugliness, and that is all we know and all we need to know. But there are signs that the novel resents such treatment. To use a burning consciousness of one's own misery, of the shackles that cut one's own limbs, to quicken one's sense of life in general, as Dickens did, to turn and twist out of the murk which has surrounded one's childhood, some resplendent figure such as Micawber or Mrs. Gamp is admirable: but to use it to fetter the reader's sympathy and curiosity upon your own individual case is disastrous. Imagination is at its freest when it is most generalized; it loses something of its sweep and power, it becomes petty and personal, when it is riveted to the consideration of a particular case calling for sympathy.

At the same time sympathy is a passion of great intensity; it makes the pages fly; it lends what has perhaps little merit artistically another and momentarily perhaps a keener edge. Biffen and Reardon had, we say to ourselves, bread and butter and sardines for supper; so had Gissing; Biffen's overcoat had been pawned, and so had Gissing's; Reardon could not write on Sunday; no more could Gissing. We forget whether it was Reardon who loved cats or Gissing who loved barrel organs. Certainly both Reardon and Gissing bought their Gibbons at a second-hand book-stall, and lugged the volumes home one by one through the fog. So we go on capping these resemblances, and each time we succeed, dipping now into the novel, now into the letters, a little glow of satisfaction comes over us, as if novel reading were a game of skill in which the puzzle is to find the face of the writer.

We know Gissing thus as we do not know Hardy or George Eliot. Where the great novelist flows in and out of his characters and bathes them in an element which seems to be common to us all and not to himself alone, Gissing remains solitary, self-centred, apart. His is one of those sharp lights beyond whose edges all is vapour and phantom. But mixed with this sharp light is one ray of singular penetration. With all his narrowness of outlook and meagreness of sensibility Gissing is one of the extremely rare novelists who believes in the mind, who makes his people think. They are thus differently poised from the majority of fictitious men and women. The awful hierarchy of the passions is slightly displaced. Social snobbery does not exist; money is desired almost entirely to buy bread and butter; love itself takes a second place. But the brain works, and that alone is enough to give us a sense of freedom. For to think is to become complex; it is to overflow boundaries, to cease to be a "character," to merge one's private life in the life of politics or art or ideas, to have relationships based on them partly, and not on sexual desire alone. The impersonal side of life is given its due place in the scheme. "Why don't people write about the really important things of life?" Gissing makes one of his characters exclaim, and at the unexpected cry the horrid burden of fiction begins to slip from the shoulders. Is it possible that we are going to talk of other things besides falling in love, important though that is, and going to dinner with Duchesses, fascinating though that is? Here in Gissing is a gleam of recognition that Darwin had lived, that the telegraph had been invented, that people read books and talk and look at pictures, that once upon a time there was such a place as Greece. It is this that makes his books such painful reading that they can never "attract the subscribers to Mr. Mudie's Library." They owe their peculiar grimness to the fact that the people who suffer most are capable of making their suffering part of a reasoned view of life. The thought endures when the feeling has gone. Their unhappiness represents something more lasting than a personal reverse; it becomes part of a view

of life. Hence when we have finished one of Gissing's novels, what we have taken away is not a character, nor an incident, but a comment upon life.

Close as he was to his characters, Gissing too commented upon life, and because he was always thinking, he was always changing. In that lies much of his interest for us. As a young man he had thought that he would write books to show up the "hideous injustice of our whole system of society." Later his views changed; either the task was impossible, or other tastes were tugging him in a different direction. He came to think, as he believed finally, that "the only thing known to us of absolute value is artistic perfection . . . the works of the artist . . . remain sources of health to the world." So that if one wishes to better the world one must, paradoxically enough, withdraw from it and spend more and more time fashioning one's sentences into perfection. Writing, Gissing thought, is difficult; perhaps at the end of his life he might be able "to manage a page that is decently grammatical and fairly harmonious." Certainly passages in his book stand out like stone slabs, shaped and solid, among the untidy litter with which the pages of fiction are strewn. For example, he is describing a cemetery in the East End of London:—

"Here on the waste limits of that dread east, to wander among tombs is to go hand in hand with the stark and eyeless emblems of mortality; the spirit fails beneath the cold burden of ignoble destiny. Here lie those who were born for toil; who, when toil has worn them to the uttermost, have but to yield their useless breath and pass into oblivion. For them is no day, only the brief twilight of a winter's sky between the former and the latter night. For them no aspiration; for them no hope of memory in the dust; their very children are wearied into forgetfulness. Indistinguishable units in the vast throng that labours but to support life, the name of each, father, mother, child, is but a dumb cry for the warmth and love of which fate so stinted them. The wind wails above their narrow tenements; the sandy soil, soaking in the rain as soon as it has fallen, is a symbol of the great world which absorbs their toil and straightway blots their being."

For he never ceased to educate himself. While the Baker Street trains hissed their steam under his window, and the lodger downstairs blew his room out, and the landlady was insolent, and the grocer refused to send the sugar so that he had to fetch it himself, and the fog burnt his throat and he caught cold and never spoke to anybody for three weeks and yet must drive his pen through page after page and vacillated miserably from one domestic disaster to another—while all this went on with a dreary monotony, for which he could only blame the weakness of his own character in this lodging house or that flat, the columns of the Parthenon, the hills of Rome still rose above the fogs and the fried fish shops of the Euston Road. He was determined to visit Greece and Rome. He actually set foot in Athens, he saw Rome, he read his Thucydides in Sicily before he died. Life was changing round him; his comment upon life was changing too. Perhaps the old sordidity, the fog and the paraffin, and the drunken landlady was not the only reality; the past with its leisure and its literature and its civilization were perhaps more real to him now. His books in future were to be about Rome in the time of Totila, and not Islington under Queen Victoria. He was reaching some point in his perpetual thinking where "one has to distinguish between two forms of intelligence"; one cannot venerate intellect only. But before he could mark down the spot he had reached, he, who shared so many of his characters' experiences, shared, too, the death he had given to Edwin Reardon, and he died, saying to the friend who stood by him, "Patience, patience," an imperfect novelist, but a highly educated man.

## THE POOR MAN'S OYSTER

THE best of all bivalves is the oyster; the mussel runs him very close. In the official statistics oysters are reckoned by hundreds, mussels by hundredweights. You will be lucky if you get a hundred good oysters for thirty shillings, but, if you choose to buy mussels wholesale, you can get a hundredweight for about ten shillings. Oysters are scarce, especially since the great mortality which overcame them in 1920; mussels are abundant all round our coasts. And so the mussel has become known as the poor man's oyster. During the months with an "r" in them the rich, except a timid or dyspeptic few, eat oysters; the workers in our great industrial centres eat mussels. Not that the mussel is wholly unknown elsewhere. In Soho his worth is recognized: in the West End, wherever there is a French chef you may be sure that mussels play a part if only in soups and sauces; but a dish of mussels such as you may eat any day in a Soho restaurant—well, if you are a millionaire, a duke, or a fashionable freak you might venture, but otherwise you are likely to lose caste.

Although the mussel is well known in many industrial towns, his popularity is still somewhat local, and, considering how cheap and abundant mussels are, the total quantity landed from our native mussel beds, some 85,000 cwt., not all of which are eaten, for some are sold for bait for fishing, is really remarkably small. It has been calculated that, whereas one acre of good pasture land will produce in a year 100 lbs. of butcher's meat, with a food value of 100,000 calories, or 120 gallons of milk, with a food value of 400,000 calories, an acre of the best mussel ground will produce in the same period 40,000 lbs. of mussels, containing 10,000 lbs. of mussel meat, with a food value of 3,000,000 calories. There must be thousands of acres of good mussel ground round our coasts, and though no one would recommend an unvaried diet of mussels—or of oysters, or any other shellfish—it is clear that we have here a reserve of food which is not fully exploited.

For our comparative neglect of mussels there may be many reasons; but probably the chief of them is sewage. Many persons are afraid of them, as some are also of oysters, because it is known that they may become carriers of diseases from which they are themselves immune. Large tracts of the coastal waters are polluted by the sewage of seaside towns. The sewage carries with it masses of bacteria the majority of which are actually harmless; but among them there may be the bacilli of typhoid, dysentery, and other intestinal diseases. Any bacteria that come along are liable to be absorbed by the mussels who, themselves immune, act as carriers and pass on the disease to those who eat them. The mussel "drinks like a fish." One mussel can pump ten gallons of water through himself in twenty-four hours, and, in doing so, acts as a filter, taking out of the water all fine matter in suspension and all bacteria. It has been estimated that the mussels on one of our principal mussel beds can thus "drink" in twenty-four hours some three thousand millions of gallons. This amount is, according to the calculation of physiologists, five times the total quantity of liquid consumed in an equal period by the whole human population of the globe. So active a filter will not miss much, good or bad, and may store up large and vigorous colonies of pathogenic organisms. But, as will be seen hereafter, the drink habit of the mussels can be turned to account to remove from them all the germs of disease, so that they can be eaten with impunity.

Because of the risk of infection, many of our shellfish beds have been closed by the Public Health authorities. The terms of the Orders generally prohibit the sale of mussels from the beds for human consumption unless they

have been cleansed by approved means. The mussel fisheries of Conway are a case in point. The estuary of the Conway produces probably the finest mussels in Great Britain, but, for the protection of the public health, their sale was forbidden in 1912. Since 1916, however, Conway mussels have been sold freely and eaten without any untoward consequences. Before the closure, complaints of illness attributed to eating Conway mussels were reported about once a week during the mussel season. Since the reopening of the fishery under the protection of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in 1916, not a single case of sickness has been traced to Conway mussels. The secret is a very simple one when it is explained. After thorough and painstaking research and experiment the Ministry devised and applied a method of cleansing which is completely effective and practically fool-proof.

So long as the water contains impurities, the mussels will absorb them. What they take up is largely fine mud: with it they take also whatever bacteria may be present. But, naturally, they do not retain this material indefinitely. What is not digested is excreted. The two processes, accretion and excretion, go on simultaneously. The excrement, in form like a fine ribbon, is, so to speak, insulated in a wrapper or envelope of mucous. It sinks to the ground in short strips. In course of time the water, especially if it is disturbed by wave action or currents, will, of course, break them up and release the infective material to be reabsorbed, but for a while at least its mischievous activities are curbed, and, with care and the necessary facilities, they can be kept under control.

Any intelligent and interested visitor who wishes to see the process employed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in operation can count on a welcome at the Ministry's tanks at Conway, almost in the shadow of the famous castle. The cleansing plant consists of a series of concrete tanks built one above the other on sloping ground, some wooden grids, supplies of fresh and sea water, a pump and some simple and harmless chemicals. At the top is the storage tank, into which water is pumped from the estuary at the period of the tide when the water is cleanest. Below the storage tank is what is known as the sterilizing or chlorinating tank. In this tank water run from the storage tank is sterilized by the addition of chlorine. When sterilization is complete a chemical reagent is added to neutralize any traces of pure chlorine that may remain, and in the end all that is left of the chemicals is a very slight addition of common salt and possibly some other residua so infinitesimal that they cannot be detected by any known chemical process. In short, the water is sterile and free from chemicals.

Next below the chlorinating tank are the cleansing tanks. In these the mussels waiting to be cleansed are spread in a thin layer on wooden grids, which raise them a few inches above the bottom of the tanks. The mussels are then hosed with clean, fresh water, under pressure, to remove from them any mud which may adhere to them and, if allowed to remain, may pollute the sterilized water when it enters the tanks. The tanks slope slightly from back to front, and the mud washed off the mussels is flushed right away out of them. When the mussels and the tanks have thus been hosed clean the outlets are closed, the sterilized water is run into the tanks, and the mussels are left to "drink" for twenty-four hours. Two hundred bags—each containing about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.—of mussels can be cleansed at one time, and, during the twenty-four hours, the mussels will "drink" as much as the whole population of Greater London, Manchester, and Liverpool combined. Actually they pass the whole of the water in the tanks through and through themselves, filtering it all the while. The water, though free from bacteria, contains particles

of matter in suspension, and it is interesting to see how rapidly the living filters make the water as pellucid as the purest pool of the purest sea.

At the end of the twenty-four hours the water is allowed to run out of the cleansing tanks. The dejecta of the mussels lie, insulated as has been explained, at the bottom of the tank, and, as yet, unbroken. A powerful flush of sterile water is run over the bottom of the tanks and sweeps all the dejecta away. The mussels have already rid themselves of most of the impurities they contained, but a fresh supply of sterile water is run into the tanks, and the cleansing process goes on for another twenty-four hours. At the end of this period not only can the mussels be eaten without risk, but they are actually cleaner and safer than any mussels taken direct from the natural beds. But, to make assurance doubly sure, they are put through one more brief process. They are washed for a few minutes in water with free chlorine in it. The purpose of this washing is to disinfect, if need be, the shells; for there is always the chance that, in crevices of the shells or of barnacles adhering to them, some impurities may linger, in spite of the preliminary hosing. Should there be any such, the mussels might pass them from one to another in the bags. Every mussel retains inside its shell a supply of water equivalent in weight to about one-quarter of the total weight of the mussel—shell, meat, and water. This water they release by degrees, and water released by those at the top may take up impurities from the shells of the middle layers and pass them on to be absorbed by those below. Hence this final precaution, for the Ministry leaves nothing to chance. But no one need fear that in eating the mussels he will eat chemicals. In the main cleaning process, as has been shown, the mussels cleanse themselves in water in which only infinitesimal traces, if any, of chemicals remain. During the final process, when they are actually in contact with free chlorine, the mussels remain obstinately closed, and none of the water penetrates to them.

The mussels being now safe to eat are put up in sterilized bags, each holding about 1½ cwt., or from 13,000 to 15,000 mussels, the bags are sealed with a leaden seal, which indicates that the mussels within have undergone the approved cleaning process, they are placed on a waiting lorry and promptly conveyed to the station, whence they are dispatched to their destined markets. The poor man's oysters have been doctored, and the poor man may enjoy their excellent flavour without a moment of uneasiness.

JAMES BLAKE.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

UNDER the auspices of the Froebel Institute, Mr. Bertrand Russell gave an extremely interesting lecture at the Caxton Hall on the subject of "Nursery Schools and the State," with the especial object of calling attention to the extraordinary results achieved by Miss Rachel and Miss Margaret McMillan at their nursery school in Deptford. Mr. Russell first discussed the general advantages of a nursery school as opposed to "home" for all young children, and then secondarily pointed out its special advantages for the children of the very poor, living in crowded districts. In the Deptford nursery school, dangerous and common infantile diseases, such as rickets, have entirely disappeared. Modern science leads one to believe that morally, physically, and intellectually the years from one to seven are the most important in the life of any human being. If nursery schools were universal the cost to the State need not be more than £20 per head per year. It is to be hoped that Mr. Russell's lecture will also call attention to Miss McMillan's excellent books on Nursery

Schools which are published by Dent. The chair was taken by Lady Astor, who, in returning thanks to the lecturer, flatly contradicted herself at least five times in as many minutes.

"The Apache," at the Palladium, comes as near to being a high-brow musical comedy as anything I have seen for some time. The plot and settings are fresh, and for the first two acts the interest is well maintained. The Apache (played by M. Carl Brisson) has been cheated out of his château by an extremely engaging sardine king (M. Shaun Glenville), and adopts his profession in order to rob his profiteering successors. In the course of his romantic career his relations with the sardine queen become more complicated than he had quite anticipated. The acting and production were not quite up to the level of the piece; the apaches particularly were less athletic than might have been hoped; there were twice too many girls in the chorus, and they wore twice too many clothes to suit this French musical comedy. Still, the performance had its points. Mr. Shaun Glenville was extremely funny, and Miss Constance Evans almost inhumanly agile during the few moments she was on the stage.

"Souls Aflame," of which there has been a trade view at the Hippodrome, is one of the hack films which are now being turned out in Germany almost as rapidly as they are at Hollywood. The technique is as old-fashioned as the subject is uninteresting; captions and close-ups abound. The heroine is married to a rotter and loses her heart to a professor of ski-ing, a very Teutonic touch this. The husband is shot, and the skier naturally is suspected, but the real criminal is a libidinous but high-minded Turkish bashaw, who is himself being tracked by an Armenian, whose village had been destroyed by the Turk. Naturally all ends happily. There were some pretty photographs of ski-ing and of Alpine scenery by night, but the story itself marched on leaden wings. Mr. Paul Wegener showed an impressive dignity as the Bashaw, and a Chinese gave a vivacious rendering of a Chinese servant. Otherwise the action was barely mediocre.

The film version of the Don Juan story (at the Astoria Cinema) gives a very different idea of that fickle lover to the usually accepted legend. Here is a Don Juan essentially of the films, a hero of noble bearing, somewhat given to amorous intrigues, indeed, for no lady, apparently, can withstand his fascination, but yet true to the innocent queen of his heart, for whose pure love he scorns the advances even of Lucrezia Borgia. This, not unnaturally, leads to difficulties, which, however, thanks to certain tricks invented by Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, the hero is able to overcome, even to escaping from his dungeon under the Tiber, rescuing his lady from the Borgias' torture-tower, and carrying her off to Spain and happiness. Mr. John Barrymore plays the part with a grace and distinction which render the film much less commonplace than it otherwise might have been. The settings too are well conceived, and the uncomfortable atmosphere of a party at the Borgias' is well done, as is Don Juan's duel with Count Donati, the heroine's bridegroom. But it is a difficult task for an American film actress to impersonate Lucrezia Borgia; this one looked merely a hard-faced chorus-girl. And there seems really no reason for calling the film "Don Juan."

The brightest spot in the programme of the B.B.C.'s concert at the Albert Hall on February 17th, was, without doubt, Beethoven's C Minor Symphony. Signor Molinari conducted it in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. He made no attempt at surprising his audience by an original rendering, but allowed the magnificent music to make its own effect. His control of the large orchestra was admirable, and the attack in the notoriously difficult opening phrase of the first movement, was delightfully clear and exact. The Vivaldi Concerto was a pleasant example of eighteenth-century music, but the Verdi, Casella and Respighi, with its rattles and nightingales on gramophones, was of very little musical interest.

Things to see and hear in the coming week :—

Saturday, February 26.—

Sir Edward Elgar's "The Dream of Gerontius" (conducted by the composer), at the Royal Albert Hall, 2.30 (Royal Choral Society).

Godowsky, Pianoforte Recital, Æolian Hall, 3.

Mr. F. C. Boon on "The English Language in the Mathematical Classroom," at Bedford College, 3.

Sunday, February 27.—

Mr. J. M. Robertson on "Jesus and Judas," at South Place, 11.

Sir E. Denison Ross on "Indian Fables and their Wanderings," Indian Students' Union, 5.

Professor J. Arthur Thomson on "The Naturalists' Approach to Religion," at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, 3.30.

Monday, February 28.—

Congreve's "Love for Love," at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, 8.30 (February 28th-March 5th).

Mr. C. K. Munro's "Cocks and Hens," at the Royalty. Olive Drower, Song Recital, Æolian Hall, 8.15.

Professor H. J. Laski on "The Political Philosophy of Spinoza," London School of Economics, 5.

Mr. E. W. Phillips on "The Scope of the Actuary in Commerce and Industry," at the Institute of Actuaries, 5.

Maeterlinck's "The Death of Tintagiles," on the Wireless—from 2LO.

Tuesday, March 1.—

Mr. Cecil Lewis's "Jazz Patterns," at the Everyman.

Mr. St. John Ervine on "The Drama and Education," at the Central Hall, Westminster, 6.

B.B.C. Chamber Concert (Holland), at the Grottrian Hall, 8.15.

Wednesday, March 2.—

M. Alexandre Brissson's "Madame X," at the Lyceum.

Mr. Ramsay Muir on "Liberalism and the Empire," at the Liberal Candidates' Association, National Liberal Club, 8.15.

Thursday, March 3.—

Mr. Frank Rutter on "Reading and Art," at Mortimer Hall, 8.15.

Mr. C. Kirkham Jones on "The Battersea Scheme of Children's Concerts and Cinema Shows," at the Royal Sanitary Institute, 6.

M. Louis Piérard on "Walloons and Flemings," at King's College, 8.30 (P.E.N. Lecture).

"Lohengrin" (Wagner), at the Old Vic, 7.30.

Debate, "The Press and the Public," at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, 8.

Mr. Eustace Miles on "The Psychology of Attraction," at 40, Chandos Street, 3.45 and 6.15.

Mr. Hugh Stokes on "Three Spanish Painters—El Greco, Velasquez, Goya," at the Fulham Central Library, 598, Fulham Road, S.W.6.

Friday, March 4.—

Thibaud, Recital, at Wigmore Hall, 8.15.

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## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

### DETECTIVE STORIES

LIKE most people, I am unable to resist the attractions of a detective story. It is a curious fact that a crime, a mystery, and a detective will make almost any novel, however bad it may be in other respects, readable. And it will be readable and read by people who would never be able to get to the last page of the ordinary, bad novel. I have made the experiment myself by reading one after the other the last five detective stories that the spring tides of publishing have borne on to my table. I found that not only was it possible to read them all, but it was difficult to stop reading them. And yet two of them—"The Mystery of Belvoir Mansions," by Ben Bolt (Ward, Lock, 7s. 6d.), and "The Colfax Bookplate," by Agnes Miller (Benn, 7s. 6d.)—are, for very different reasons, poor books of their kind. I should never have got through the quag of their first hundred pages, had they not each had a detective in them. The difference in the quality of their poorness is itself of some interest. Mr. Bolt is really too unsophisticated. The international gang of criminals, with a gentleman of finance in the highest society at its head, has thrilled so often that an impossible voltage is now required to obtain even a flicker of a quiver. Mr. Bolt does his best with murder, blackmail, kidnapping, and the inevitable golden-haired and beautiful young lady whose ignorance of the world's ways is peculiar to the heroines of detective stories. Miss Miller's book suggests that this kind of novel, if it should not be too crude, can never be successfully sophisticated. Miss Miller embarks upon descriptions, character drawing, and conversations which have no relevance to the words "A Mystery," which appear on the jacket of her book under the title. Her mystery is not a bad one, in some ways, though even here she spoils things by making her coincidences fall too fast, thick, and furious. But the mystery's the thing, and the writer who starts a detective story must stick to the mystery. He cannot expect us to stop and complacently admire him writing like Henry James or Mr. Compton Mackenzie for a dozen pages while the story is forgotten.

The three other books are on a different level. "The Big Four," by Mrs. Christie (Collins, 7s. 6d.), is a disappointment. One expects the best from the author of "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd." Her new book belongs, unfortunately, to the school of Mr. Bolt's. All the "properties" of the detective story are here, from the international gang of criminals to a shadow of the immortal Dr. Watson. The theme is too hackneyed for even the most skilful composer to make anything very original out of it. Mrs. Christie shows her great skill by the ingenuity and economy with which every now and again she manages to squeeze a real thrill out of an ancient situation. But her book is not nearly as good as either "The Three Taps," by Ronald A. Knox (Methuen, 7s. 6d.), or "The Crime at Diana's Pool," by Victor L. Whitechurch (Fisher Unwin, 7s. 6d.). Father Knox and Canon Whitechurch have both written straightforward detective stories, in which the story and its kernel, the mystery, hold our attention from the first to the last page. They are both good, because in each case the mystery is an interesting problem which the reader and the detectives, lay or professional, work out together. "The Three Taps" is the better, because the problem is much more complicated and difficult and because

its solution is postponed and concealed until the last chapter. That is almost the highest praise that can be given to the detective story writer. Canon Whitechurch has the considerable merits of verisimilitude and unobtrusive ingenuity, but the reader cannot fail to see the solution some way before the end of the book, and in that respect it falls below the standard of "The Three Taps."

The detective story and its appeal are of real interest from the point of view of psychology and literature. The essence of the detective novel must always remain the story. Its motive power comes from mystery, suspense, and ultimate satisfaction. The original mystery must be sufficiently mysterious to appeal to the imagination; the story must be good enough and close enough to the mystery to hold us suspended; and in the dénouement we must feel that our suspense has been justified. It is far easier to succeed in the first two requirements than in the third, as Father Knox's and Canon Whitechurch's stories show. The deaths of Mr. Mottram in the one and of Felix Nayland in the other are both very ingeniously "wrapt in mystery"; Father Knox keeps our attention glued to the story of elucidation for the whole of his book, and Canon Whitechurch for three-quarters of his. Both of them fail to give us the highest satisfaction in the elucidation—and for the same reason. Part of the pleasure that we get from detective stories depends upon our playing an active part in them—we want to know what happened, but we also want to *find out* what happened. We are one of the detectives. Now the suspense is not justified, the highest satisfaction is not obtained, unless there is a comparatively smooth progression from mystery to elucidation. We must feel that all the elements required for discovery were given in the mysterious facts. There must be no violent and sudden disclosure by a *deus ex machina* of facts without the knowledge of which the mystery would remain. The jacket of Father Knox's book tells us that his last chapter will give us the "satisfying emotion of 'Confound-it-all, why-didn't-I-think-of-that?'" But it does not quite achieve that. When Bredon, the detective, comes to give us the account of it all, he is too much the *deus ex machina*, for he has to tell us too many facts which we could not have guessed and without which we could not have told how and why Mr. Mottram met his death.

Good detective stories are nearly always examples of the story in *excelsis*. They rely upon mystery, suspense, the breathless question "what happened next?" If the writer introduces anything extraneous to the story, he does so at his peril, for the emotions to which he is primarily appealing are so imperious. That is why the stock situations of the detective story have rarely been used successfully, even by the greatest writers, to produce a great novel. It is a curious fact that Dostoevsky's novels are nearer detective stories than are those of any other great novelist. In "Crime and Punishment," he turned a detective story into a complicated psychological novel and ethical problem; "The Possessed" has nearly all the essential characteristics of a detective story on its surface. But perhaps the strangest example of the use of the "detection" motif is to be found in the "Edipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles, where it is used with immensely tragic effect.

LEONARD WOOLF

## REVIEWS

## LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DRAMA

**A History of Late Eighteenth-Century Drama, 1750 to 1800.** By ALLARDYCE NICOLL. (Cambridge University Press. 16s.)

THIS is the third volume of Professor Nicoll's comprehensive and erudite survey of Post-Restoration drama. It is very important, when one attempts to judge a work like this, to remember the objects and necessary limits of a literary history, which is not a series of literary judgments or a critical survey of writings which have retained some popularity, but an effort to discover and to relate everything relevant to a subject in a given period. The historian must examine and note the minor as well as the major figures, and he must inevitably try to recognize and to describe those more general aspects in literature which we clumsily call influences, tendencies, movements, and the like. (Everyone who writes about literature must echo Professor Nicoll's wish that we had a more exact terminology.) It is the business of a historian to know accurately and to convey his knowledge lucidly and without pedantry. It is not his business to be as entertaining as a Persian tale, to run after witticisms, to cultivate a startling style, or to produce strange and stimulating paradoxes. And these obvious truths are not always remembered.

Judged in this way Professor Nicoll's work is deserving of every reasonable praise. He has knowledge, great knowledge, of his subject. I am not ashamed to admit that I had never heard of many of his dramatists, and that I have read very few of them. If only as a compendium of information, a book of reference, this work will long be of use to serious students and to amateurs. But Professor Nicoll has done more than this. His labours are often genuine pioneering. He has made clear a whole set of dramatic writers who were hidden in the fog of one's ignorance, and has made it possible for anyone to understand what was happening on the stage during these fifty years. If his narrative sometimes tends towards a catalogue of play titles, and authors' names, he has the justification that he was forced to cram a large amount of information into a comparatively small space. He realizes how complicated and intertwined are the influences and counter-influences in a recent period like this, but manages to convey them lucidly by means of a rigid though necessarily arbitrary classification. He has by no means neglected the foreign drama of the period, and relates his dramatists not only to their English predecessors but to their Continental masters and contemporaries.

At first sight one would say that Professor Nicoll had to cover a rather dreary epoch of the drama in this volume; and though he manages to modify that opinion to some extent, probably he would be the first to admit that the period is not exciting. The culture of that age was exclusive and aristocratic. There was obviously a polished audience for the Humes, Gibbons, and Chesterfields, but the theatrical and even the novel-reading public was either sentimental or barbarous. Since the theatre must entertain its public, such an audience made it impossible to produce the more intellectual or poetic kinds of drama; and, as Professor Nicoll points out, the more accomplished men of letters who then wrote for the stage did so with the full knowledge that they were writing down. Reynolds, for instance, wrote of his own play, "The Crusade," that he was "bound in candour to declare that a more mawkish hotch-potch, a more sickening *mélange* . . . was never offered to the public." The age was essentially non-poetic. The few poets of sensitive genius moped away their lives like Gray at Cambridge, or went mad like Kit Smart, or committed suicide like Chatterton. The best creative minds of the time found expression in the novel (the rather charming light verse belongs to an earlier period) or in scholarship or in philosophy or in elegant social trifling. Consequently, the instinctive desire for the ideal on the stage was satisfied by pseudo-classic tragedy, violent melodrama, and nauseous sentimentality. The real successes were in the comedy of manners, farce, and the sentimental comedy. Five of these have been produced under Professor Nicoll's auspices at the East London College theatre, and were liked by the audience.

In spite of this and of Professor Nicoll's praise of Colman, Cumberland, and Mrs. Inchbald, I do not believe many

of us yet feel inclined to venture very far beyond Goldsmith and Sheridan in the drama of this period. As a reasonable enough protest against our ignorance of the other eighteenth-century writers of comedy, Professor Nicoll rather underestimates Sheridan and Goldsmith. I abandon Sheridan without much of a pang, but cling quite unrepentantly to "She Stoops to Conquer." On the only occasion I saw it acted this farce pleased me and the rest of a packed house; naturally it was almost immediately withdrawn to make way for some tedious problem drama. There are obvious difficulties to be overcome before these later eighteenth-century plays can be genuinely revived. One is that they would inevitably have to be read much more frequently than witnessed on the stage. We can read the Elizabethan and Restoration dramatists with enjoyment because they have literary and poetic qualities independent of their dramatic excellence—not infrequently despite their dramatic shortcomings. But a play, especially an old play, which may still go well on the stage with able production may be very tedious to read. Melodrama is a different matter because its absurdities can be relished in private; indeed, one of my cherished possessions is a translation of a Pixérécourt melodrama called "Adeline: or The Victim of Seduction," which begins thus:—

"(A Shriek is heard from the house. Adeline rushes out, runs to the garden door, and finds it locked; totters to the centre of the stage, and sits upon a garden chair. Kertzel follows Adeline, evidently in great grief. Music commences.)

"ADEL.: Great Heaven! Not wedded!

"KERT.: You make me sorry I ever said a word about it; come now, don't take on so—cheerly, mistress, cheerly!

"ADEL. (wildly): Mistress! oh, what a fatal meaning that word forces on me! Mistress! but yesterday the light-hearted, innocent, unsuspecting Adeline: to-day!" &c.

And so on, in a magnificent crescendo. But after all, my admiration for this masterpiece is spurious. It is a poor recommendation of a dramatic period to say that its comedies make us weep with their boredom and its tragedies make us laugh with their imbecility.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

## FICTION

**Solemn Boy. A Novel of the South.** By HECTOR BOLITHO. (Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.)

**Petenera's Daughter.** By HENRY BELLAMAN. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

**Adam in Moonshine.** By J. B. PRIESTLEY. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

**The Secretary of State.** By STEPHEN MCKENNA. (Thornton Butterworth. 7s. 6d.)

**The Wild Adventure.** By KATHARINE TYNAN. (Ward, Lock. 7s. 6d.)

**Bernard Quesnay.** By ANDRÉ MAUROIS. Translated from the French by BRIAN W. DOWNS. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

THE three books which come first in this list are first novels; with the fourth the professional novelist steps in, and there is nothing much to be said. Everybody knows what Mr. McKenna's work is like; everybody knows Miss Tynan's sentimental stories; everybody is beginning to know M. Maurois. His novel is, of course, much the best of the lot, but it is not in the first, second, or third rank of contemporary fiction, and it has no real value as literature. M. Maurois is an intelligent writer, but he has not the intelligence required for the transmutation of life into art, he has only that which is indispensable for the writing of a certain kind of book. This does not mean that he is insincere, but rather that his mind, far freer than Mr. McKenna's, has the same curious limitation; so that he can write seriously and give a conscientious finish to work which has no connection with literature whatever. He has a great deal of literary sense; Mr. McKenna has very little. He is on the side of the writers who have been most truly creative in the last decade; Mr. McKenna might never have heard of them. Yet there is a much smaller distance between Mr. McKenna and M. Maurois than there is between M. Maurois and Proust. In Proust's novels, as in all genuine literature, we have the unmistakable certainty that experience is being immediately dealt with. In spite of his great tact M. Maurois does not give us this impression. "Bernard Quesnay" is a well constructed, economically written, and quite superficial story.

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A "study" of the relations between employers and workers in a factory in Northern France, it tells us nothing except that there is right and wrong on both sides. The author's attitude to the problem does not differ importantly from that of the newspapers; his workmen are no better than those of "Ian Hay." His intelligence is not really applied to the theme; it is exhausted in the production of a convincingly lifelike and quite second-hand book. The translation seems to be admirable.

Making allowance for his inexperience Mr. Bolitho rather resembles M. Maurois. His style is light, clear, vivacious; he is always full of action, yet not hurried; though moved, he is never deeply concerned; while actively questioning, he is not much troubled by his questions. Cheerful, reasonable, amiable, unembarrassed, he differs very little from the young writer in London or Paris except in the first of these qualities and in a touch of innocence which comes probably from the New Zealand environment which he describes. For a first novel "Solemn Boy" is unusually competent. It is simply and naturally written, and not as one would have expected from the affected title. But the author is never exact, witty, or vivid enough, and while pleasant to read, the book very quickly fades from one's mind.

"Adam in Moonshine" is an extravaganza. It describes the scrapes of a young man called Adam Stewart, who is mistaken for a modern Pretender to the English throne. Mr. Priestley is very much too leisurely; he mentions his hero's pipe, and immediately goes off into a miniature essay on the pleasures of smoking; in fact, he never succeeds in forgetting that he is an essayist. If the story was intended to be popular, as it seems to have been, this is a pity. For the rest, Mr. Priestley accepts thoroughly, and with no evident qualms, the tone required. "Adam looked at the night as if it were, as indeed it seemed, a strange, dark, lovely lady, moon-coloured, mistily jewelled, and for a moment these and any other grotesque adventures that might follow seemed nothing but her quaint utterances." It takes almost courage to be as thoroughgoing as that. Mr. Priestley's three young heroines are correspondingly luscious. The very strongly charged sentimentality and the lingering essayist style play havoc with the action, drawing the author up continually to gloat or to discourse. There are amusing passages, but not enough of them.

Mr. Bellaman's novel, "Petenera's Daughter," contains good work and from beginning to end a great quantity of work, good, bad, indifferent, but always conscientious. It is a pity if with this the novel should be tiresome, yet such unfortunately is the case. It belongs to the blighted and blasted school of American fiction; it portrays inarticulate characters who grope painfully for utterance, who never talk, never smile, never think, and work all the time. To write an interesting novel about such people would be almost a miracle. Mr. Bellaman has sincerity, but he has no instinct for what should be included and what omitted, and very little capacity for invention of typical incident and dialogue; and accordingly he is not very interesting. One passage is fairly representative. Sule Irack is going to have a child by Harry Grumbine. One evening she tells him so, adding that they will have to get married. Harry's response, repeated over and over for several pages, is: "Gosh, I just don't see how we're going to do it." It is astonishing. The author's impressions of the countryside are sometimes admirably vivid; we see and smell the fields, we hear the sounds. If his human beings were equal to his landscapes the novel would be remarkable. But every prospect pleases and only man is vile. We cannot believe that such people exist, or at any rate that Mr. Bellaman has comprehended them. They are not even vicious, and they are never explained.

Why politics should appear peculiarly unreal in a novel it is hard to say. At actual election times it is difficult enough to believe in "slogans"; but imaginary "slogans," imaginary statesmen, imaginary "great parties," these are simply too boring to be taken seriously. Sexual infidelity certainly helps to humanize any imaginary statesman, and Mr. McKenna has not refused it to his hero; but all is in vain. "The Secretary of State" is very dull. "The Wild Adventure" is the story of a young widow who, going to Italy, is captured by an outlaw and help captive.

EDWIN MUIR.

## THE NEW ROMAN HISTORY AND THE OLD ROMAN LAW

**Primitive Italy.** By LÉON HOMO. (Kegan Paul. 16s.)

**Rome the Law-Giver.** By J. DECLAREUIL. (Kegan Paul. 16s.)

THESE are two more volumes of the series, "The History of Civilization," that those indefatigable compilers, Messrs. Kegan Paul, are now bringing out. Both are translations from the new French collection, "L'Évolution de l'Humanité," which is intended to form the nucleus of the series. In a way it is a pity that so many volumes of a popular series should be translations, not only because a Frenchman naturally interprets antiquity, Roman law particularly, in terms of his own institutions, but more especially because translations from the French are so rarely good English. Here the translators have been singularly unfortunate with M. Henri Berr's rather pompous forewords, but the reader will find throughout Gallicisms of a more or less painful kind; for instance, it is not satisfactory in English to call a chapter dealing with the final conquest of Italy "The agony of pre-Roman Italy." These disadvantages apart, the series promises well. Both these volumes are furnished with extensive bibliographies.

M. Homo's book is exceptionally interesting, as giving perhaps the first general presentation in English of our new outlook on early Roman history, the result of the revolutionary work of Italian scholars. It is likely that many readers will find the familiar story almost unrecognizable. Romulus and Remus have gone the way of their she-wolf foster-mother into the realms of folk-lore, Tarquin the Proud masquerades as an Etruscan *condottiere*, Cneve Tarchu Rumach, and the divinely founded Rome is shown to owe its very existence to its position as an outpost of the Latins against Etruria, and its importance, institutions, culture, even its name, to the Etruscan occupation. Thus M. Homo calls his book "Primitive Italy" (though the word "primitive" certainly gives a wrong impression in English) to emphasize his point that the predominant Italian people right up to the fourth century were not the Romans but the Etruscans. He does admit the existence of the Septimontium, the league of little villages round the Latin outpost on the Palatine, which many scholars jettison with the rest, but that is about all that we are left of pre-Etruscan Rome. It is possible that he exaggerates the cultural magnificence of Etruria, and a corrective may be applied by reading Professor Conway's account in the Cambridge History of the many deleterious effects of the Etruscan civilization; but this is a natural reaction against the traditional superiority of Rome, and the bias may easily be discounted. The latter part of the book, which takes Roman history down to 146 B.C., is less novel; on the whole M. Homo is better at exposition than at narrative, and his discussion of that vexed question, the inevitability of Roman expansion outside Italy, is notably lucid. He writes under one great disability, that the plan of the series has apparently allotted a separate volume to the constitutional development of the Roman State, so that, for example, he is not allowed to explain in detail the theory of *imperium* and its limitations, and thus his treatment of provincial organization has its obvious deficiencies. But his account of the origins of Rome is clearly the best available to the general English reader, at any rate until the appearance of the relevant volume of the Cambridge Ancient History: then we shall see what we shall see.

M. Declareuil's task has been a very different one from M. Homo's. For while it would be almost impossible to make a dull book out of the story of the Roman Republic (though even that has been done), it requires a Gibbon to make an analysis of Roman law palatable. The Romans, whose great work as jurists was the codification of law as a starting-point for succeeding nations, were themselves legislating in the void, providing for their own needs as each arose, and only much later attempting to classify and systematize. In their law of property, for example, the Romans "did not establish either a logical system or a single theory of possession"; consequently they gradually acquired a whole web of conflicting legal methods of holding and transferring rights, and the only way to make these interesting or even intelligible to the general reader would have been to trace in considerable detail the origin of each method and

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its subsequent history, a work requiring a much larger volume than M. Declareuil's. So that, except where he has to describe the workings of some comparatively simple institution, as the family or the *gens* (and he does this admirably), M. Declareuil's book is one to be consulted rather than read.

### AN UNHAPPY WARRIOR

**The War Diary of the Emperor Frederick III., 1870-1871.** Translated and Edited by A. R. ALLINSON, M.A. (Stanley Paul. 16s.)

WHEN the Emperor Frederick, as Crown Prince of Prussia, commanded the Third Army in the Franco-German War, he kept a rough diary of his impressions, which he subsequently expanded to its present bulk, mainly by incorporating extracts from his letters to his wife. He claimed however—and internal evidence fully supports his statement—that the expanded narrative records simply his "actual, personal experiences and feelings from day to day," and was not revised in the light of subsequent events.

It is this fidelity to the impression of the moment that gives the book its interest. To a great extent it is a record of disillusionment. By nature a cultured, kindly gentleman, with a tendency to liberal social and political views, and a genuine shrinking from bloodshed, it was Frederick's misfortune to be born a Hohenzollern, and a very capable soldier—no mere royal figurehead, but a good general of the second rank, a competent lieutenant to von Moltke. In the early stages of the war his distaste for the "bloodstained laurels" of Weissenburg and Wörth is kept in subjection by his belief in the justice of the German cause, and by his passionate desire for the accomplishment of German unity. As the long siege of Paris drags on, his regret for the inevitable horrors of the war is quickened by a growing uneasiness as to its results. He notes sadly the increasing bitterness of both sides, the hardening of the German temper, the changed character of the "war aims." Everything becomes coloured by his ceaseless suspicion of Bismarck:—

"Bismarck has made us great and powerful, but he has robbed us of our friends, the sympathies of the world, and—our conscience. I still hold fast to-day to the conviction that Germany, without blood and iron, simply by the justice of her cause, could make 'moral conquests' and, united, become free and powerful. . . . The insolent, brutal 'Junker' willed it otherwise."

This freedom of comment, and such passages as that in which Frederick describes his father's despairing agitation in "bidding farewell to the old Prussia," and assuming the title of "Emperor of Germany," amply explain his directions forbidding publication of the diary until fifty years after its completion. They serve now to give life and colour to a narrative which, as the editor frankly admits, "is not without its *longueurs*."

### MISS HOOK OF HOLLAND

**The Netherlands Display'd.** By MARJORIE BOWEN. (The Bodley Head. 25s.)

THOUGH The Hague is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, it is a place at which it is best to arrive by night. For its beauty is the beauty of the eye of an ox. It has the unromantic calmness of that sacred beast. Only at night is it possible to impose any intensity of significance on the too placid scene of the unruffled Vyver, with its tame swans and the unexcitingly pleasant houses around. Probably it was this same calmness, so characteristically Dutch, that drove Rembrandt, painting at Amsterdam, to his marvellous experiments in chiaroscuro. They mark a reaction from the deadly placidity about him. He does not, consciously, epitomize "the greatness of the nation both in men and achievement," as Miss Bowen claims the sculptor Verhulst epitomized it. Rembrandt epitomizes rather the attempt to escape from it. Did he not turn away from the clear bright art of his country's past and take the romantic Italian Caravaggio as his point of departure? However much or little he succeeded in imparting intensity to his dark figures, at least he left the domesticities to Dou and the cattle to Cuyp.

Miss Bowen's illustrations, photographic reproductions of pictures by famous Dutch painters, do not include any

from Rembrandt. She emphasizes the "sanity" of Dutch art, of Holland's past, of its present. The people are "eminently sane." The pictures that pleased her in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam did not include the sketch for the allegorical "Peace of Westphalia" by Rembrandt. She is eloquent about the "so lively, so true, so sane" representations of such subjects as fruit in a dish and corn in a field by other hands. She has written a sane book for sane people. That is to say, it is a little humdrum and sentimental. Sometimes, as when she touches on alchemical visions of terror, it is superficially, although gracefully, jocose. Her Holland, described in the exhaustive detail permitted by nearly five hundred pages of moderate-sized print, is all common sense. And as common as sensible. It is more elaborate than Baedeker. Events are reconstructed, not merely referred to. But the point of view is the same. Her sentimentally touched-up sketches of events are, however, written by an obviously practised hand. One remembers for a while her young Prince of Orange, as silently worldly wise as the hero of a novelette, and the vaunting white feathers of a young princess who came suddenly upon the corpse of her husband. And a tomb with figures of which the wind appears "to have just stirred the hair and the draperies" suggests something a little better even than theatrical sentimentality, the literary influence of the creator of Sebastian van Storck.

### THE MAN CHARLES STUART

**Charles I. in Captivity.** Edited by GERTRUDE SCOTT STEVENSON, M.A. (Arrowsmith. 15s.)

IN her introduction to this ingeniously compiled study of Charles I. the writer lays it down that religious apologetics and political propaganda are outside the scope of history, and she has so far followed her own counsel that in the narrative proper comment is confined to an occasional note correcting an error or supplementing a statement; yet a suspicion creeps in that the story is not as remote from apologetics and propaganda as the sterner sort might wish.

It is an amiable foible of human nature to esteem those who shine in adversity above those who merely conduct themselves with propriety in prosperity—a more difficult but less attractive business. If adversity were the proper business of a king, then Charles Stuart could be accounted entirely estimable. Indeed, reading this story of his captivity and death, compiled entirely from contemporary sources, only a curmudgeon would deny the dignity, urbanity, and courtesy of the unhappy man upon whose devoted head the crude consequences of the Tudor Reformation had so disastrously fallen. The story, however, though it seems sincere, is not conclusive; for although the chief narrator, Sir Thomas Herbert, was gentleman of the bed-chamber to Charles throughout his captivity, he was also an officer accredited for that purpose by Parliament, and, consequently, would not have been privy to the Royalist intrigues of which Charles is suspected of being cognizant. Moreover, his narrative, written for Sir William Dugdale, Garter King-at-Arms under Charles II., was unlikely to contain anything derogatory to the memory of the royal prisoner.

Yet the portrait presented convinces; for it is now fairly patent that from the turmoil of mixed motives, working in a medium of political and religious chicanery, which characterized the domestic politics of these islands from the accession of Charles to his death, the figure of the king emerges at least as untarnished as that of any other of the principal actors. The quarrel throughout was a religious quarrel, in which either side strove to use religious prejudice as a lever to political ends; the country as a whole, as the struggle proceeded, swaying from side to side, though never very emphatically to either. Lady Fairfax was probably right when she cried out at the trial that the court did not represent a tenth of the people. What was fought out, consciously during the weak rule of Charles, unconsciously during the strong rule of Cromwell, was not so much the political liberty of the subject or the rights of Parliament, as the question of how much religious intolerance the country would tolerate; and in the end it was demonstrated that the country was not prepared to suffer continually any religious intolerance whatever that impinged upon the comfort of the decent indifferent

# REJUVENATION—

## The Progress of Modern Scientific Discovery.

The iron age, the stone age, the mediæval age—all the dark ages of mankind have faded into oblivion, and the present—the day of science—has come into its own, foretelling the bright days of the future when the sway of the illnesses which now cast a shadow over the world will be entirely broken. To-day is the day of electricity—now known to be the all-embracing, all-potent power of the world. Recent scientific discoveries reveal the fact that every known substance is in reality a form of electricity varying according to the number and activity of the electrons which compose it. These electrons revolve around nuclei as planets do around the sun. The human body is in consequence merely a form of **SOLID ELECTRICITY** composed of trillions of electrons, and, by its form and structure, a perfect electrical machine.

All our lives we generate electricity—the negative current passing through the nerves and the positive through the blood. This dual type of circulation is life. This fact has recently been strikingly demonstrated by the invention of a burglar alarm which is set in action solely by the electricity given off by the burglar who approaches it.

In youth, when the human electrical machine is young, we generate, if healthy, a superabundance of electricity. The result is revealed in an abundance of energy and activity. As time goes on our ability to generate electricity lessens, and more and more of the less important parts of the body receive a lessened supply because, to maintain life, the main shaft, as it were, must receive its proper supply. The result is that one begins to suffer from gout, sciatica, rheumatism, and countless other enfeebling ailments.

Such old age is not necessarily one of time, but more often of constitution, brought on sometimes by excess but in many cases an inheritance from birth. In every instance the remedy is to infuse into the body the lacking electricity. To do this in the required quantities without injury has hitherto been thought impossible, owing to the lack of the correct apparatus. The invention of a wonderful machine called a "Rejuvenator" by Mr. O. Overbeck, F.R.S.A., F.G.S., F.P.C. (Lond.), of Chantry House, Grimsby, has at last solved the problem. This machine is so constructed that it supplies electricity both to the brain centre and the parts of the body locally affected as well. It imparts in the most pleasant and harmless way, the necessary electricity wherever required.

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majority. The people of England have no objection to religion as such, but their love of priest or presbyter has never been very pronounced or very prolonged, and has always been governed by secular considerations. The seventeenth century saw the question of intolerance put to its severest test. The fight was long and bitter, the victims were many, and there was probably no victim more unconscious of evil intent than the man Charles Stuart.

### JOHN EVELYN TO HIS GRANDSON

*Memoirs for my Grandson.* By JOHN EVELYN. (Nonesuch Press. 10s. 6d.)

ECHOES of many voices, speaking in many different tongues, whisper through these pages: from the Wisdom of Solomon, from the "De Senectute," from Montaigne, from Chesterfield, from a host of other writers. They express again the attitudes of old age to itself, of the elder to the younger man. They are, in a sense, a recapitulation of past experience, a preparation also for death, but at the same time a blending of all past regrets and future fears, as if, by their fusion, the loneliness of dying might somehow be mitigated—*Lenior et melior fit accedente senectate*. Therefore it is the privilege, and perhaps the duty of age to direct youth, as much as it is the custom, and perhaps the right of youth to neglect the precepts of its elders.

So John Evelyn, when he was eighty-four years old, sat down to compose these *Memoirs* for his grandson, who doubtless read them but forgot them until it was his own turn, as a grandfather, to advise his grandchildren. For experience, after all, is the only teacher, and Evelyn's grandson would find out for himself, and not from his ancestor, that "Chore-women insensibly inchoach and are commonly introduc'd by idle servants." The charm, however, of this book lies less in the advice given than in the vivid portrait of him who gave it; as such it is a valuable addition to our knowledge of Evelyn, though in a wider sense it is an unusually detailed study of an old man putting his house in order while there is yet time.

John Evelyn was born at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and outlived it by six years; the *First Folio* was published while he was still in the cradle, the "Principia" before he was laid in the grave. Over this long span of eventful years, the troubles of which seem barely to have touched him, in all his dealings, whether public or private, he remained true to his type, that of the country gentleman. In this capacity he cultivated his garden, with infinite care, first at Deptford and finally at Wotton, where he seems to have discovered the secret of a happiness that, for all the entertainment he drew from it, he had never really enjoyed in Society. The *Diary* in one sphere, the *Discourse on Medals* and on *Forest Trees* in the other, were the fruit of his observation; the last two books, to which we may now add these *Memoirs*, give a faithful picture of him, as of a russet apple that for hanging overmuch in the shade has never properly ripened. In them we may discover his passion for husbandry, "his admirable fussiness," an unshakable faith, the recreations, indeed, of a serene, but unoriginal, spirit. These were the qualities he set most store by, and it was his most anxious wish that they might bestow themselves upon his grandson, the heir to the family estates.

The *Memoirs* are an odd mixture of moral precepts and practical hints. The house, the garden, the library, servants, marriage, religious instruction, are all discussed with the same precision and method: "You will learn little by young people, but much by Antient"; "Suspect everything that is too prosperous"; "Do nothing without Advice." The young man must live within his income, be temperate in Field Sports, eschew games of Hazard and other worldly pleasures, have more than a "superficial tincture" of a thousand and one subjects. "Regard must be likewise had of the Brew-house, coppers, coolers, and other vessels that there be no idle fellows hankering with their Tankards and leather bottles when they are Tunning." And so on. Inventories are to be kept, as also a commonplace book, locks to be oiled, cupboards aired, drains and gutters cleaned out at least once a year; the garden must be developed and trees planted; nothing, in fact, from family prayers to the disinfecting of

hen-coops is left unmentioned in the inventory of this querulous old gentleman. Every contingency was foreseen. With one exception, however, which was that the grandson might do all these things of his own accord. And that is exactly what happened. The grandsire's fears were groundless since his heir neglected none of his duties; he planted trees and built a library, which still exist much as they were two hundred years ago.

The manuscript of these *Memoirs* at Wotton has been transcribed and edited, with notes, by Dr. Geoffrey Keynes, and is now printed for the first time. The work of editor and publisher is admirable in every respect. It is important that an unlimited edition should be made as soon as possible.

### DARK, DARKER, AND DARKEST AFRICA

*Caravans and Cannibals.* By MARY HASTINGS BRADLEY. (Appleton. 21s.)

*Savage Life in the Black Sudan.* By C. W. DOMVILLE-FIFE. Seeley, Service. 21s.)

*In Ashanti and Beyond.* By A. W. CARDINALL, F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I. Seeley, Service. 21s.)

THESE three books, taking the list in inverted order, deal respectively with dark, darker, and darkest Africa; since even amongst blue-black natives there are gradations of mental hue. Mr. Cardinall writes as a District Commissioner on the Gold Coast; Mr. Domville-Fife explores districts where there is no Commissioner; and Mrs. Bradley penetrates wilds where any intending Commissioner would run a sporting risk of being eaten. Mrs. Bradley's intention was to be the first riser; darkest Africa had to be visited from America without delay, before the white man's civilization should mar its virginity. "The old savage life of the continent," she writes, "is virtually gone. There are only remnants of it here and there, like pools drying after the flood has ebbed." The pool into which Mrs. Bradley plunged, with a small party that included her eight-year-old daughter, was on the eastern edge of the Belgian Congo. There she shot elephants, camped in remote native villages, and duly encountered cannibals, who proved not unfriendly. They had one welcome taboo—women were never eaten. The gaiety of Mrs. Bradley's easy-going narrative gives the impression that neither dangers nor natives are so black as they are painted.

Mr. Domville-Fife has a different opinion on the drying pools of savage life. Barbarism, he contends, does not die out with the scattering of names over a map and the placing of a Government official amongst wild tribes. The explanation of this variance seems to be that closer observation reveals greater depths of barbarism. Although Mr. Domville-Fife's book is also a traveller's record, he is more nearly concerned with the study of various races of the Sudan, some of whose customs, even in so harmless a matter as hair-dressing, would make the American authoress reconsider her championship of savagery. Mr. Domville-Fife's most interesting chapters are those dealing with the little-known Nuba tribes of Southern Kordofan. In spite of the difficulty of language the author succeeded in collecting a fund of information about this isolated mountain race, whose religious beliefs and ritual, widely differing from those of the majority of Africans, suggest an ancestral connection with the Priest-Kings of Ancient Egypt.

The Africa of the lonely resident official is Mr. Cardinall's domain; where the occasional meeting with a fellow-white brings unused throat muscles into play, and where solitude is relieved by observation of human, animal, and insect life. Amongst more personal adventures, the pagan rites and ceremonies of Gold Coast natives are discussed in a leisured and anecdotal style, which indicates the resident gathering experiences in the course of duty, in contrast to the restless traveller whose primary aim is to collect material and set it down.

After all, Mrs. Bradley's anxiety to be in time for barbarism is comprehensible. It is a solemn thought that the haphazard information of these volumes must yield to an organized future of Cook's Tours through Cannibal Land, when witchcraft and devil dances will be staged, like the brigandage in Corsica, for the benefit of visitors.

SYLVA NORMAN.

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

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## APPOINTMENT OF WARDEN.

**THE COUNCIL** invites applications for the post of Warden, vacant by the marriage of the present Warden. Candidates (unmarried), who must be Graduates and prepared to undertake a part-time teaching appointment on the University Staff, should forward to the undersigned not later than April 6th particulars of qualifications and experience, together with not more than three testimonials.

The Warden will be required to take up residence on July 6th, and to commence his duties on August 1st.

Information as to terms and conditions may be obtained from

C. G. BURTON,  
Secretary.

## HYMERS COLLEGE, HULL.

**THE GOVERNORS OF HYMERS COLLEGE** invite applications for the HEADMASTERSHIP, which will become vacant as from September 1st, 1927, on account of the retirement of the present Headmaster, C. H. Gore, Esq., M.A.

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The successful candidate will be offered the option of residence in the School House, situated in the grounds, rent free, but he will be required to pay the rates.

Boarders may not be taken by the Headmaster.

Applications should be made not later than March 8th, 1927, on Forms which may be obtained upon application to the undersigned on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

A. H. WINTERBURN,  
Clerk to the Governors,  
Hymers College,  
Hull.

## UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

**THE UNIVERSITY** will shortly proceed to award two University Post-graduate Travelling Studentships, each of the value of £275 for one year, and two post-graduate Studentships of the value of £150. The studentships are open to both Internal and External Graduates of the University. Applications (on a prescribed form) must reach the Principal Officer, University of London, South Kensington, S.W.7 (from whom further particulars can be obtained), not later than May 2nd, 1927.

## LECTURES.

## UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

**A LECTURE** on "THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE" will be given by LIEUT.-COL. SIR MAURICE HANKEY, G.C.B., LL.D. (Clerk of the Privy Council, and Secretary of the Cabinet and Committee of Imperial Defence), at the LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on FRIDAY, MARCH 11th, 1927, at 5 p.m. The Chair will be taken by THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF BALFOUR, K.G.

A Course of Three Lectures (in German) on "GOETHE UND DIE WELTLITERATUR" will be given by PROFESSOR FRITZ STRICH (Professor of German Literature in the University of Munich), at KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON (Strand, W.C.2), on FRIDAY, MARCH 11th; FRIDAY, MARCH, 18th; and MONDAY, MARCH 21st, 1927, at 5.30 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT HALDANE OF CLOAN, O.M.

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**GRESHAM COLLEGE**, Basinghall Street, E.C.2. Four Lectures on "Cervantes and 'Don Quixote,'" will be delivered by Professor Foster Watson, D.Litt. Tues., Mar. 1st: "Cervantes and his Work"; Wed., Mar. 2nd: "The World of Don Quixote"; Thurs., Mar. 3rd: "The Wisdom of Don Quixote"; Fri., Mar. 4th: "The Glory of Don Quixote." Lectures free, begin at 6 p.m.

**"THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ATTRACTION,"** by Mr Eustace Miles, Thursday, March 3rd, at 8.45, and "THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COOKING," by Miss Catherine Brown, M.C.A., at 4.15 p.m., in the GREEN SALON, 40, Chandos Street, Charing Cross. Admission 1s.

## LITERARY.

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## ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

MESSRS. ELKIN MATHEWS publish an edition of "Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children," by Sara Coleridge, the poet's daughter, originally published in 1834 (7s. 6d.).

The following are some books of a political or economic nature published lately: "Economic Annals of Bengal," by J. C. Sinha (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.); "Early European Banking in India," by H. Sinha (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.); "Thomas More and his Utopia," by Karl Kautsky (Black, 6s.), which compares the "Utopia" with modern socialism; "Dependent America," by William C. Redfield (Williams & Norgate, 10s. 6d.), which is a survey by a former Secretary of Commerce of the position of the U.S.A. as an importing nation; "Imperialism and World Politics," by P. T. Moon (Macmillan, 15s.); "Justice among the Nations," by Horace G. Alexander (Hogarth Press, 1s.); "My Farm in Miniature," by George Morland (Faber & Gwyer, 10s. 6d.).

"A Diplomatist in Europe," by Sir Arthur Hardinge (Cape, 16s.), contains the reminiscences of a diplomatist who ended his career as Ambassador at Madrid. "Cues and Curtain Calls," by H. Chance Newton ("Carados"), contains theatrical reminiscences (Bodley Head, 12s. 6d.).

Messrs. Methuen publish a new edition of "The Mystic Rose," a study of primitive marriage, by Ernest Crawley, which has been revised and greatly enlarged by Theodore Besterman (two vols., 30s.).

"Debrett's House of Commons and the Judicial Bench, 1927" (20s.), is corrected to January 25th, 1927, and contains the usual invaluable information.

"The Doctor at Home and Nurse's Guide," by George Black (Ward, Lock, 5s.), is a new and completely revised edition.

"The Art of Decorative Painting," by Walter Bayes (Chapman & Hall, 21s.), is a new volume in the Universal Art Series.

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## THE OWNER-DRIVER

## SERVICE: THE KEYNOTE OF SUCCESS

PASSING through one of the large industrial centres of the North early this week I was much impressed by the number of Chryslers which were in evidence in the streets, and later in the day I discovered scores of these cars in and around one of the local garages.

The explanation is that every owner of a Chrysler for miles round had been advised that if he took his car to the appointed place it would be examined by a travelling staff of experts and tuned it up by the makers' own mechanics from Kew.

I found no fewer than fifteen men specially engaged on the work, and owner-drivers and chauffeurs were taking full advantage of their opportunity to secure free adjustment and advice.

It was a noteworthy sight to see so many keen motorists gathered together and exchanging their experiences, and I was not surprised to learn that the Chrysler Company's interpretation of the word "Service" had greatly impressed their customers.

In the United States these travelling mechanical staffs are, of course, quite common, and to a limited extent a similar procedure is followed by a few British firms, but a great deal more might be done in the same direction in the interests of the home industry.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the owner of a car sets great value on a firm that considers it worth while to see its products are giving the fullest satisfaction, and from what I have seen and heard from Chrysler drivers in one centre alone I have not the least doubt that the Chrysler Company's policy is calculated to yield a handsome return on the expense involved.

It was good to hear last week from a reader of these notes in Vancouver that in Brook's Super-Sparker we have one useful device which no American or Canadian car manufacturer has yet adopted, but one cannot look at the Chrysler "80" without wondering why British cars are not equipped with a battery water-level indicator and a coil to warm the petrol before it is drawn into the induction pipe.

If the acid-level in the accumulators is maintained a white light on the *facia* board indicates the fact, but if the light is extinguished the driver knows that more water is needed, and although the battery is concealed under the foot-board in the front compartment provision is made whereby the vents may be removed and the necessary amount of *aqua pura* added with the minimum amount of trouble.

I should not object to my batteries being removed from the running-board if the makers of my own car followed the Chrysler example, but I should protest very vehemently if they were entirely out of sight and so inaccessible that without an inspection lamp it would be impossible to tell whether the accumulator plates were covered or not. It seems a pity that in the year 1927 one of the best of our new six-cylinder cars is open to this objection.

No end of trouble arises through the neglect of batteries, and I am sure the manufacturers of electrical equipment would have far fewer complaints if car producers made it easier to give the required attention to the accumulators.

The Chrysler method of heating the fuel before it leaves the carburetter interests me very much, because for many years I had a coil with a crude metal clip (connected by a piece of flex to an electric plug in my garage), which gripped the float chamber of a carburetter. At the time I owned a car which was not easy to start on icy-cold mornings, and this simple method of applying heat to the float chamber cured the starting trouble.

This idea is brought bang up-to-date on the Chrysler "80." All one has to do is to press a button on the dash-board.

Owner-drivers have a keen eye for these clever notions and wish more of them were standardized on British cars.

RAYNER ROBERTS.

Mr. Rayner Roberts has for many years been recognized as an exceptionally well-informed writer on motoring subjects, and his wide experience as an Owner-Driver is at the service of our readers. Communications should be addressed to the Motor Editor, THE NATION AND ATHENÆUM, 38, Great James Street, London, W.C.1.

## UNDERGROUND RAILWAYS.

The Meetings of the Proprietors of the Underground Railways were held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Thursday, February 24th. The Rt. Hon. Lord Ashfield, P.C., in the Chair.

The Chairman said:—

The reports and accounts for the year 1926 which I have to present to you to-day should afford you a moderate sense of satisfaction when you reflect upon the troublous and unusual times through which your Companies have come during the year without permanent impairment of their financial position, and, as you will be asked to confirm later, with the payment of the same dividends as were paid a year ago. I should explain at the outset that this result is attributable to the London Electric Railway Companies' Facilities Act, 1915, and the agreements made thereunder constituting the common fund, which require the group of Companies whom you represent to share with each other in a common fortune and to afford to each other mutual support. While the exact amounts are not ascertained, the railways, which suffered from the effects of the industrial disturbance throughout the major part of the year, have contributed appreciably less than they have received; the London General Omnibus Company, which speedily recovered from the general strike, has contributed much more than it has had returned to it. Thus experience, year by year, only serves to strengthen our belief in the value of this arrangement for stabilizing our financial position and fully justifies our claim that an extension of this arrangement, in a suitably modified shape, is capable of securing for London an adequate and efficient system of passenger transport, based upon the existing level of fares.

Yet I would not have you think that all this disturbance of industry has been other than disastrous. Both last year when we met and in the preceding year, I was able to report increases, in the numbers of passengers carried by this group of Companies, amounting to round about 100 millions. This year I can only report a meagre addition of less than 4 millions. The railways, as you may see from the statistical supplement which you have all received, lost almost 9 millions of passengers, in spite of the opening for traffic in September last of seven additional route miles and seven additional stations. The omnibuses gained almost 13 million passengers, an insufficient reward for the provision of services over 59 additional miles of roadway. When 1926 opened, the returns for the first few months were favourable, and if the level of receipts had continued unchanged, there would easily have been a record expansion of your business. The coal dispute and the general strike have robbed us of the rewards of our enterprise.

The Edgware Extension of the London Electric Railway, which was completed in August, 1924, has continued to develop its traffic, though at a much slower rate than was anticipated. The traffic for the month of December, 1926, was 674,000 measured by passengers, as compared with 594,000 for the month of December, 1925. The growth is therefore equal to 14 per cent. only. We have sought to account for this retardation in growth, though not very successfully, unless it is that land speculation at the Edgware terminal has forced up prices to a level which restricts purchasers. This is an evil which besets all railway enterprise, and suggests as a remedy some means by which the increment in the value of the land could be appropriated to pay some share of the enormous cost attending the construction of underground railways in Greater London. The London County Council have decided upon co-operation with us in one form, at any rate, for both at Burnt Oak near Edgware and at Morden, they have purchased large tracts of land for housing developments, and at Burnt Oak they have already laid out roads, put in sewers and commenced the erection of 2,000 houses, soon to be increased to 4,000 houses. We may, therefore, confidently expect a speedy growth in the volume of traffic in this direction.

It is of interest to note the extent of the burdens which have been laid by Parliament upon this group of Companies. In last year the sum required to meet them was £711,000, which represented 5 per cent. of the gross receipts and the equivalent of no less than 88 per cent. of the amount distributed for the year in dividends upon ordinary stocks and shares. Of this sum £589,000 was paid to meet taxation in the strict sense; the balance of £122,000 was represented by contributions towards health, pensions and unemployment. It should not be forgotten that at least one-fifth of the amount distributed in dividends must also be paid over to H.M. Treasury in income tax, so that, in effect, the shareholders receive no more than £648,000, while Government receives £751,000 out of the results of our labours last year.

Last year was a good year, but given peace in industry as I have outlined it, this year should be a better year. We need it. Last year we were lucky in the weather. We had a succession of fine week-ends in the summer months. If coal were dearer, petrol and rubber were cheaper. Our fortune turns on so many factors: we are always full of disappointments and compensations. Still, the balance appears to be turning at long last in our favour and revives our hopes of being able to give satisfaction to all, whether passengers or shareholders or employees. In so far as we can deserve our good fortune by our own efforts and perseverance you may rely upon us, upon our officers, and, I trust, also upon our staff as a whole.

The resolutions were carried unanimously.

## THE HOME AND COLONIAL STORES, LTD.

The thirty-second ordinary general meeting of the Home and Colonial Stores, Ltd., was held on February 17th, at 2 and 4, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

Mr. H. G. Emery (Chairman and Managing Director), in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said that the net profit for the year 1926 amounted to £480,178, to which was added the sum of £95,546 brought forward, making a total of £575,725. After providing for the dividend on the 6 per cent. Cumulative Preference shares, the 15 per cent. Cumulative Preference shares, and the 15 per cent. Cumulative Ordinary shares, and the interim dividend of 1s. 6d. per share on the ordinary shares, and placing £48,018 to reserve, there remained a balance of £323,707, which the directors proposed should be appropriated as follows: to the payment of a final dividend on the Ordinary shares of 1s. 6d. per share, making 15 per cent. for the year, £75,000; to the payment of a special bonus for the year on the Ordinary shares of 2s. per share, £100,000; to the company's staff sick fund, £5,000; to the company's staff benevolent fund, £5,000; to provide for income tax, £11,000; and to carry forward £127,707. Dealing with the various items appearing in the balance-sheet, the Chairman said that stocks on hand, at £1,085,343, showed an increase of £321,503, and he wished to emphasize the fact that all the stocks were well bought and absolutely liquid. Investments, £498,504, showed very little difference from the previous year, the present market values being £17,770 in excess of the book values. Trading investments and freehold properties, at £1,142,688, compared with £1,148,257 in the previous year, whilst the figure for goodwill remained stationary. Reserves had reached £1,215,627, and the balance of profit and loss account was £323,707, compared with £287,629 a year ago.

It might be asked why, in view of the increased profit, the directors had not recommended the same bonus as on the previous occasion. The answer was that, although they heard and read about a better outlook, especially in the staple industries, throughout the country, improvement after the upheaval from which the country had so recently emerged must, in the nature of things, be slow; and they were, therefore, of opinion that at this stage, at any rate, it would be in the best interests of everybody concerned that they should conserve the company's resources, and, after all, a dividend and bonus together representing 25 per cent. was a return to which few would take exception. (Hear, hear.)

True to its name, the Home and Colonial Stores still continued its time-honoured tradition of specializing in foods grown and manufactured at home and in the British Dominions beyond the seas. That this policy was approved by the shopping public was evidenced by the great and growing demand for the company's Empire butter, Empire cheese, Empire teas, Empire coffee and cocoa, Empire sugars, Empire fruits, British-made margarine, and British-made jams, cakes, and biscuits. Many of the shareholders, no doubt, had seen the reports which appeared in the Press in August of last year of the purchase by the Home and Colonial Stores of what amounted to practically the whole of the season's exportable pack of Australian canned fruits. This transaction, involving, as it did, the handling of over 5,000,000 tins, was large enough to have afforded a helping of fruit to every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom.

Mr. W. May seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

## THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW.

MARCH, 1927.

3s. 6d. net.

### CONTENTS:

THE CHINESE UPHEAVAL.	By Sir VALENTINE CHIROL.
JOHN MORLEY.	By the Right Hon. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.
PRAYER BOOK REVISION.	By the Right Rev. the Lord BISHOP OF OXFORD, D.D.
THE EDUCATION OF THE ADOLESCENT.	By Sir ROBERT BLAIR, LL.D.
THE CASHUBES OF THE CORRIDOR.	By Sir ROBERT DONALD, G.B.E.
THE DOUBLE TRAGEDY OF MEXICO.	By Mrs. MONTGOMERY CAMPBELL.
THE NEW CATHOLIC POLICY IN FRANCE.	By PHILIP CARR.
THE "IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY" IN THE UNITED STATES.	By Dr. EDWIN DELLER.
SIR ISAAC NEWTON, 1642-1727.	By J. A. LLOYD.
JAPAN'S NEW EMPEROR.	By Dr. J. INGRAM BRYAN.
BEETHOVEN.	By F. DANIEL WISEMAN.
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SHELLEY.	By MARJORIE A. BALD.
DOES BACKING PAY AS A PURSUIT?	By WILLIAM HILL.
FOREIGN AFFAIRS:	By GEORGE GLASGOW.
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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

RAILWAYS AND THE TRUSTEE ACTS—METROPOLITAN RAILWAY—RUBBER—GRAND TRUNK.

**A**TREATISE upon the uses and abuses of the Trustee Acts would be profitable writing. The Trustee Acts are designed for the protection of the trustee rather than for the protection of the trust funds. For example, the trustee status of the London & North Eastern Railway Company's prior stocks has been maintained by the payment of a dividend of one-eighth of 1 per cent. on the preferred Ordinary stock. To attain this object £5,355,700 had to be transferred from the Railways Act Compensation Reserve, and £1,555,000 from the Contingency and General Reserve funds. The L.N.E.R. Company is perfectly entitled to juggle with its reserve funds for the purpose of obtaining cheaper credit. There is no uncertainty in the wording of the Trustee Act. Under Section (g) of the Trustee Act of 1925 (applying to England and Wales) a trustee may invest in the debenture or rent charge or guaranteed or preference stock of any railway company in the United Kingdom which has during each of the past ten years before the date of investment paid a dividend at the rate of not less than 8 per cent. on its ordinary stock, and under Section (r) in any of the stocks, funds, &c., for the time being authorized for the investment of cash under the control or subject to the "Order of the Court." The rules of the Supreme Court for this purpose, as well as the Scottish Trustee Act, admit investments in the prior securities of the British railways which have paid a dividend on their ordinary stocks for ten years irrespective of the rate of dividend paid. The "Order of the Court" was intended to enlarge, not to restrict, the Trustee Acts, to give some elasticity to an otherwise rigid investment manual. There is no point in arguing, with the TIMES, that these two sections of the Act create two classes of Trustee stocks, superior and inferior. There always have been different classes of Trustee stocks. A New South Wales loan is inferior compared with a Western Australian loan, or a Western Australian loan compared with a South African, or a South African with a British Government loan. But it is a pity that the Trustee Acts should operate to raise the credit of unsound or undeserving borrowers.

We doubt whether the City has taken as seriously as it might the proposals of the London Labour Party organizations for buying up the Underground Combine and running the electric railways (including the Metropolitan), omnibuses, and tramways under one joint municipal traffic authority. But the idea that the Metropolitan Railway will some day be taken over by a London traffic combine may be responsible in part for the demand for Metropolitan Consolidated Ordinary stock. In spite of a reduction in the rate of annual dividend from 5 per cent. to 3 per cent., in spite of a withdrawal of £50,000 from reserve to meet the increased cost of coal and of another £50,000 to help pay the ordinary dividend of 3 per cent., this stock has risen from 60½ to 64½, at which price the current yield is only £4 15s. per cent. The position is not so bad as it appears. A drop of 15 per cent. in working receipts is making comparison with a year of Wembley Exhibition traffic. A drop of 27 per cent. in net income follows from a year of strikes and dearer coal. The financial position of the Company is still strong. In 1924 the Company set aside out of revenue the sum of £180,000 for the proverbial "rainy day." Last year it poured, but only £100,000 of this sum has been taken, and the compensation money received from the Government for war-time usage is still intact and stands at the substantial figure of £1,249,781, apart from the General Reserve Fund of £75,316. Taking the long view, the Metropolitan Railway is in the unique position of having (a) about 93 per cent. of its gross railway revenue derived from passenger traffic, of which the long-distance suburban traffic is steadily developing, and (b) about 42 per cent. of its net income derived from sources outside the railway, such as the development of country estates in the Home Counties.

The stock market rightly failed to feel impressed by the gloomy plaintiveness of Lord Aberconway about the alleged "road competition." In the matter of road transport the railways have a credit and debit account. While the Metropolitan may be losing some short-distance traffic in Greater London to the omnibuses, it is gaining long-distance traffic for no other reason than that the motor-car and omnibus are making the country more habitable. Previously the radius of supply of passengers for the Metropolitan country lines was walking distance from the station. Now anyone may witness the local omnibuses bringing their load of passengers to the stations anywhere up to thirty miles from London. In fact it might be impressed upon Lord Aberconway that none of his Metropolitan Country Estates would have been developed without the advent of the motor-car and 'bus. His objection appears to be that the present increase in long-distance traffic does not balance the present decline in short-distance traffic. But that might be expected, as it takes time for houses to be built and for estates to be developed. But the future of the Metropolitan Railway seems assured, and the market may be right in discounting the early return to a 4 per cent. dividend basis.

A different tone was observed in the rubber share market this week. It was quietly confident rather than "bullish." There was a feeling that rubber shares would not be bought at much lower prices this year. For the first time for many weeks arrivals and deliveries of crude rubber in London had practically balanced. By about the middle of next month it is expected that arrivals will begin to show substantial reductions as a result of the cut on February 1st in the Eastern export quota. For the long view we think that a purchase of rubber shares may be justified. Some time ago we gave the revised estimates of Mr. Miller, the Chairman of Messrs. Harrisons & Crosfield, of world production and absorption of rubber in 1926. We are now in a position to correct these figures from recent information we have received, and to give some closer estimates of the probable reduction and absorption this year:—

WORLD CRUDE RUBBER.

	Production.	Absorption.	Additions to or with- drawals from stock.
1925	505,000	555,000	— 50,000 tons.
1926	611,000	543,000	+ 68,000 tons.

Production for 1927 we estimate at approximately 560,000 tons on the assumption that the price of rubber will average under 1s. 9d. per lb. throughout the year. Consumption we estimate at approximately 556,000 tons, taking 195,000 tons for consumption outside America, and 361,000 tons as the minimum consumption for the United States. This figure for the United States is 2,000 tons less than the actual consumption in 1926, and allows for a probable decrease in the number of new cars and in a further large consumption of reclaimed rubber.

UNITED STATES RUBBER CONSUMPTION.

	1925.	1926.
Pneumatic Covers Manufac- tured	56,000,000	59,000,000
Consumption of Crude Rubber	388,000 tons	363,000 tons
Consumption of Reclaimed Rubber	144,000 tons	190,000 tons

The Royal Assent has now been given to the Canadian Government's settlement with holders of the 4 per cent. Grand Trunk Pacific Debenture stock. In effect the stock-holders are receiving a high-class security with a low rate of interest (2 per cent.) guaranteed by the Government of Canada, and with a high redemption return secured by the operation of a 2 per cent. per annum sinking fund. Great credit is due to the financial house of Helbert, Wagg & Co., who recovered what seemed to be a hopeless situation. For years the dispute between Government and stock-holders had proved incapable of solution, but in a few months Messrs. Helbert, Wagg secured the agreement of both parties to a businesslike arrangement.

## SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS COMPANY

The ordinary general meeting of the proprietors of the South Metropolitan Gas Company was held on February 23rd at Cannon Street Hotel, London, E.C., Mr. Charles Carpenter, D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E. (the President), in the chair.

The President said: The results of the year's working have not been disappointing. We have held our own; but in very trying and unusual circumstances.

There are three informing tests of success applicable to any business—first, has it gained in volume; second, has it increased in customers; and, thirdly, what has it earned? I will deal now with the first two points. The gas supply to South London is mainly a service based upon necessity rather than of luxury. Although theoretically it ought not therefore to be greatly influenced by enhanced prices, the fact is incontestable that these invariably do check gas consumption, while by falling ones the use of gas is stimulated. As one result of the coal strike we had to raise our charges during the second half of the year by an average of rather less than 15 per cent. South Londoners' pockets are not sufficiently elastic to meet without economizing such an extra strain upon their resources, for, in a great number of instances, the amount allocated to gas is a definite proportion of the weekly budget. Then, too, there was the restriction in shop lighting. In this connection it should be borne in mind that whatever be the form of lighting favoured by tradespeople within their shops there is no uncertainty about their award of the palm to gas lamps as a means of attracting customers to visit them. Our high pressure lighting services provide the most pleasing, I might even say beautiful, form of outdoor illumination and the after-dark appearance of the important shopping centres south of the Thames is more suggestive of Oriental brilliance and charm than of the drabness too frequently associated with its busy thoroughfares and streets. These two circumstances account fully for the fact that I am unable to report any actual increase in the gas sold over the last twelvemonth.

But if gas consumption has remained on the whole stationary a substantial increase has taken place not only in the number of consumers but in the quantity of appliances in use. This would have been greater still, but for the check upon sale and hire of apparatus imposed by the shortage and high price of manufactured iron. The popularity of gas copper and bath heaters is continually extending, and they can be fixed at any suitable position in the house to which a gas pipe can be led. An important branch of our sales organization is devoted to the design and improvement of gas-using appliances, not only industrial but domestic. While these are mainly for use in our own area of supply their usefulness is evidenced by the fact that they find their way into other parts of London and indeed the country beyond. The turn-over of our gas fittings business showed a substantial increase over the previous year. It is becoming more and more essential to provide that the many possibilities of gas shall be available for use by the public. The problems involved in warming the human body and the apartment in which it lives are quite different ones, and our physical laboratory has been conducting some very interesting investigations as to which are the best kind of energy rays from a therapeutic point of view. The new so-called log-fire we showed last year at the Ideal Home Exhibition has met with a success quite beyond our anticipations.

I now come to deal with the subject which more than anything else has dominated the Company's operations during the past year. I refer to the two great strikes. I have often regretted from this chair the wastefulness arising from having to lay down large stocks of coal for no other purpose than to provide against these outbursts of industrial unrest. Not only do we have to spend large sums in rehandling the coal thus purchased, but it never produces such good results either of gas or by-products, as freshly wrought material. We had once more to face this contingency in the early spring of last year, providing for the emergency nearly a quarter of a million tons, or one-fifth of our total yearly consumption. But it soon became evident that even an extreme provision of this kind would not see us through the continuing difficulty. Fortunately, we were led to turn our thoughts to American rather than Continental coal, and of this quality we purchased something like 800,000 tons, the remainder of our requirements being made up from various parts of Europe. Our dealings with America were highly satisfactory, there being no disposition to take any advantage of our industrial troubles. And had it not been for the shortage of freight when other buyers in increasing numbers looked across the Atlantic for their supplies, we should have got through with no other handicap than that of unloading, which threatened to be our one great difficulty. The American coal was carried in steamers not only very much larger than those normally serving the company, but more suited to carrying grain or general cargoes, and it was evident that but a small proportion of these could be cleared at the unloading piers and jetties in ordinary use. Fortunately, every help was given to us by the authorities, who by this time must have realized, even if they did not earlier, that the great strikes had a deeper origin than a mere industrial dispute.

We received invaluable aid from the Board of Admiralty, by whose courtesy there was placed at our disposal the special facilities installed both at Portsmouth and Sheerness for the coaling of war-craft. But for this timely and great assistance

our position would have been very difficult, for every possible means of discharge on the Thames was taxed to the utmost by large users of coal.

Our gas consumers, therefore, obtained right through the strike the fullest value for every therm of gas they paid for, and this is not less remarkable when I remind you that we have never used, except experimentally many years ago, water gas as a supplement to our coal gas. We have no prejudices in this matter. It is simply that it does not fit in so well to our conditions, and we have therefore no apparatus installed for its manufacture.

I now turn to the paragraph in the Report dealing with a recent development of our Co-partnership.

As far back as 1842 this Company constituted a Fund to provide sick benefits by mutual contributions from itself and its employees, and in 1855 a Superannuation Fund was founded on similar lines. In 1911 when the State imposed its scheme of compulsory Health Insurance our people pleaded hard to be allowed to contract out of its provisions, in a manner similar to that pertaining to Accident Insurance which has been so successfully dealt with by us under "contracting-out" schemes. Our request was not granted, but we were allowed to reconstitute our Sick Fund to suit the requirements of the Insurance Commissioners. In 1920 State Insurance against unemployment was made general, and although our efforts to "contract out" were again futile we were enabled by arrangement with the Ministry of Labour to provide unemployment benefits in substitution for those otherwise payable at the Employment Exchanges. In 1921 our employees' Superannuation Fund was revised and remodelled to suit the altered conditions of to-day as regards wage values. Not for the first time private enterprise proved in advance of the State. Three years later the State scheme of insurance was extended to provide old age pensions at sixty-five and annuities to widows and orphans. After consultation with our employees we decided again to raise the question of contracting out, and of merging the existing funds for sickness, unemployment, and superannuation into one on the so-called "All-in" principle.

Once more negotiations were opened up with the authorities, and this time with success.

The next matter to which I must refer is that of our dividend. I had hoped it would be greater, but the events of 1926 have been too much for us. As it is, we have drawn £98,000 from the fund specially authorized by Parliament to meet such contingencies as those through which we have passed. You will remember that under our new constitution three-fourths of our surplus profit goes automatically to consumers by way of reduction in prices, and the remaining fourth we are entitled to divide equally between the shareholders and employees. The sum is not the greatest we could have shared, but the most that we considered justifiable in the circumstances.

As regards the personnel of the Board, I should like to add my testimony to the words of the Report recording the death of Mr. John Mews. We shall greatly miss him at our counsels. His successor, Mr. F. McLeod, is so well-known to all of you that I need say little about his acceptance of a share in those responsibilities of management with which he has been so long and so intimately acquainted. He has brought to our consultations a logical mind and a well-balanced judgment, both of which qualities will not lose in usefulness by being transferred to another sphere of action.

I beg to move: "That the report and accounts now presented be received and adopted."

Mr. Frank H. Jones, M.Inst.C.E. (Vice-President) seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

The President next moved: "That a dividend at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum be now declared."

Mr. A. M. Paddon, M.Inst.C.E., seconded the motion, which was carried.

The President then moved: "That Mr. A. M. Paddon be re-elected a director."

The motion was seconded by Mr. B. R. Green, and carried. On the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. H. Frost, Mr. Frederick McLeod was re-elected a director.

Mr. Frederick McLeod, J.P., also thanked the meeting for his re-election as a director. He said that he had served the company practically throughout the whole of his life, and it was with peculiar pleasure that he felt the honour bestowed upon him at that meeting in allowing him, in a different status, to serve the company. It would be his proud privilege to continue in perhaps a less active way, but certainly with undiminished interest, to further the progress of the company, and wherever he could to help the President and his other colleagues on the board. He had been able for a long time—longer, in fact, than some people were able—to continue at work, and work in the South Metropolitan Gas Company was work as it used to be understood in his youth; it was work to which a healthy-minded man was always attracted and which he always found pleasure in doing. For more than a quarter of a century he had had the special privilege of working under the direct personal guidance of their President, either as Secretary or General Manager, and throughout that period he had been honoured with the confidence of the President and of the directors generally. Whenever there had been special difficulties—and there had been many such difficulties during the past year—he had always been conscious of the President's friendship and counsel and sympathetic support, without which the burden of office would frequently have become almost unbearable.

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